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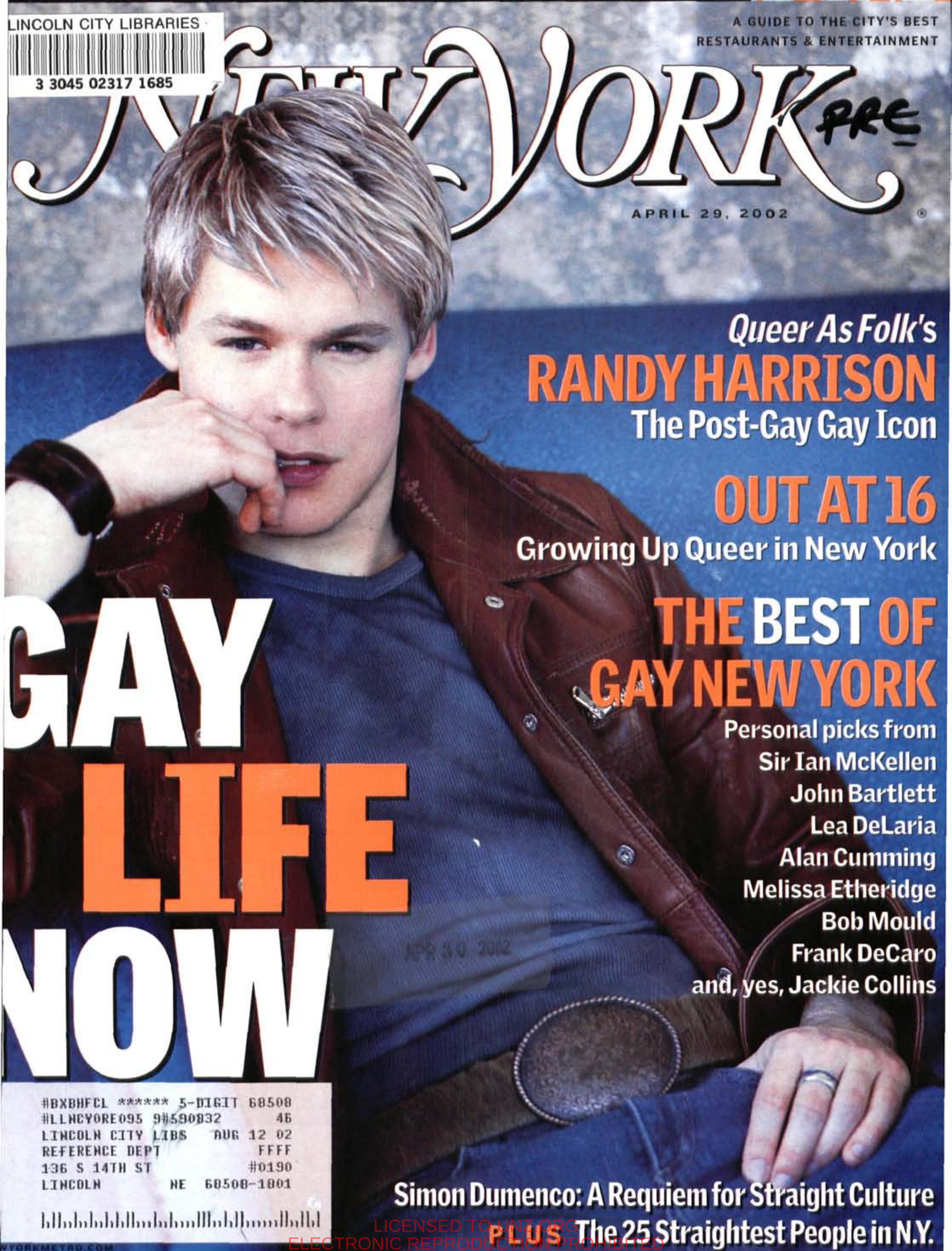

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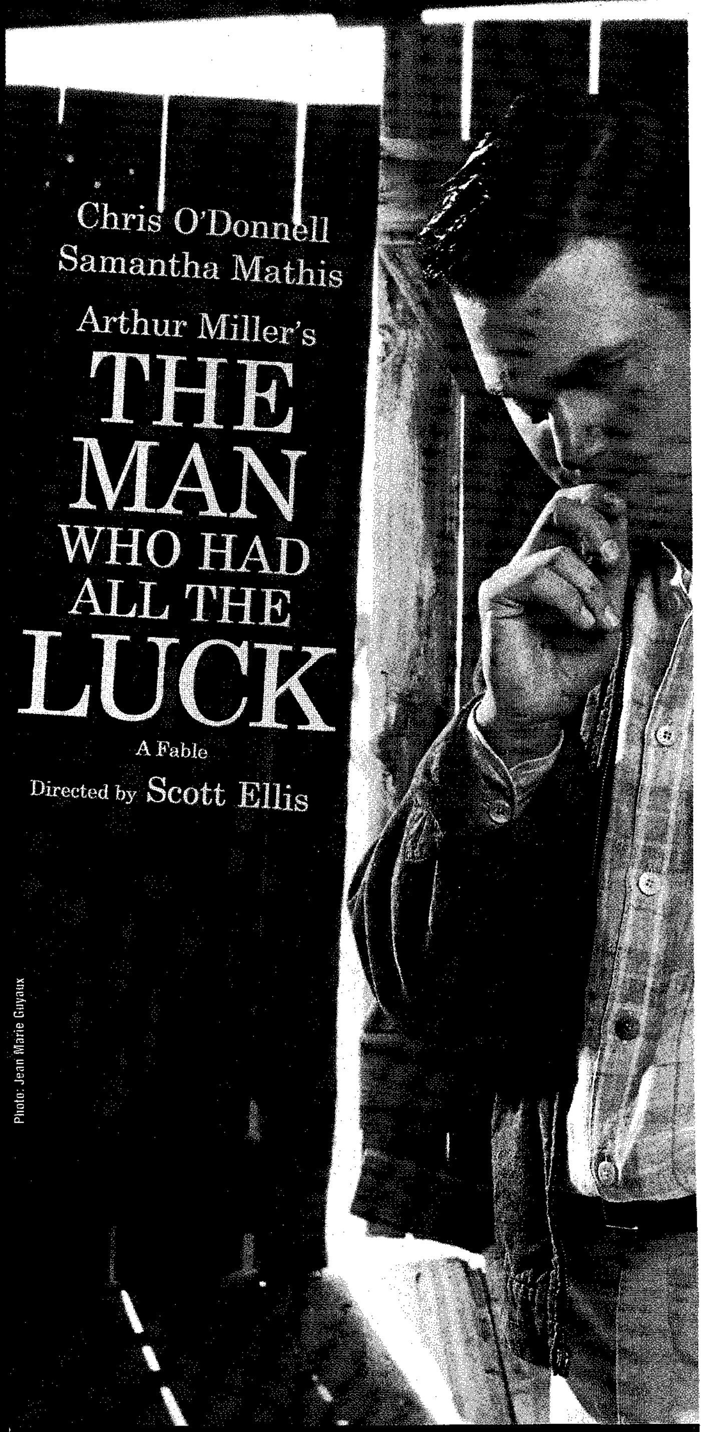

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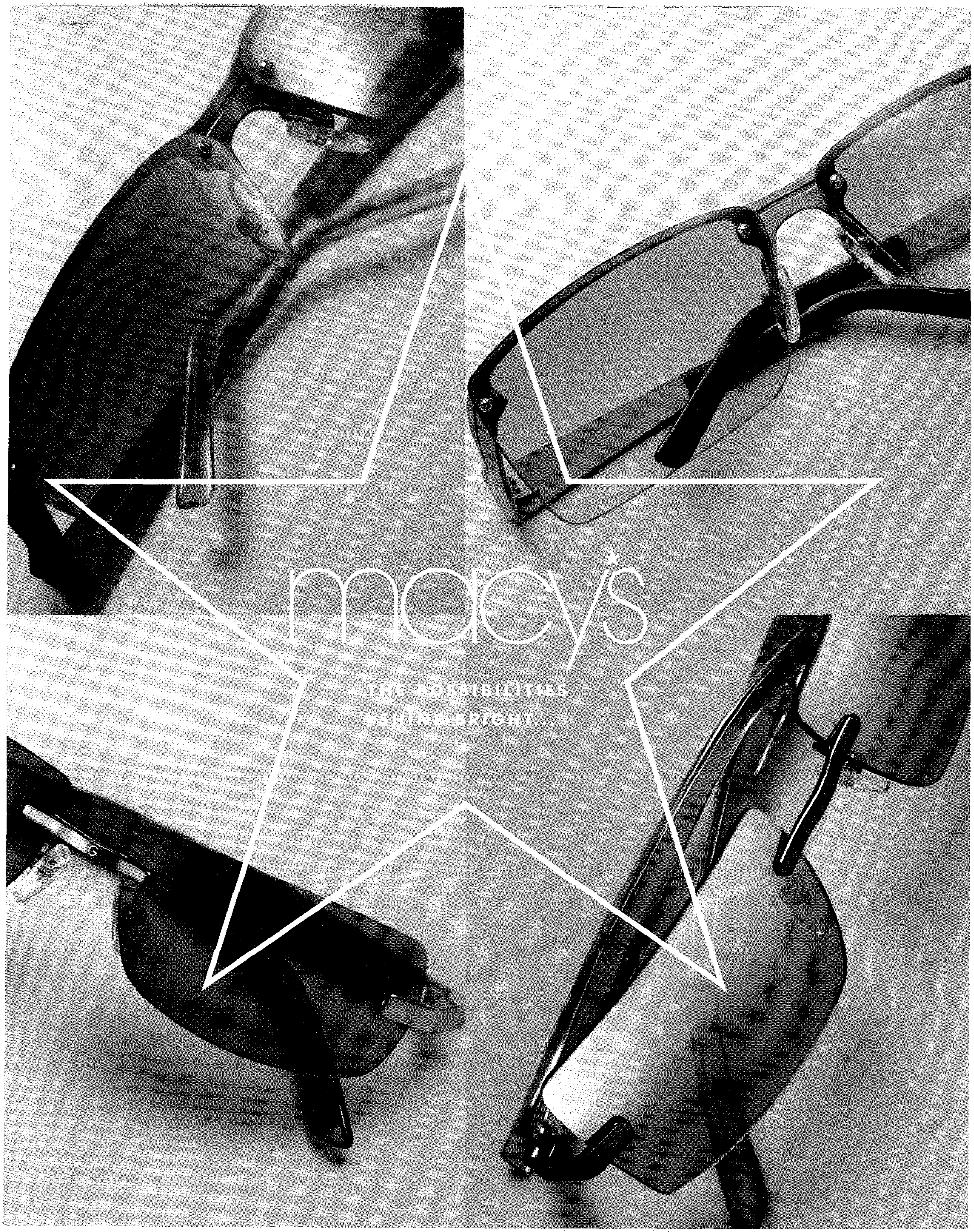
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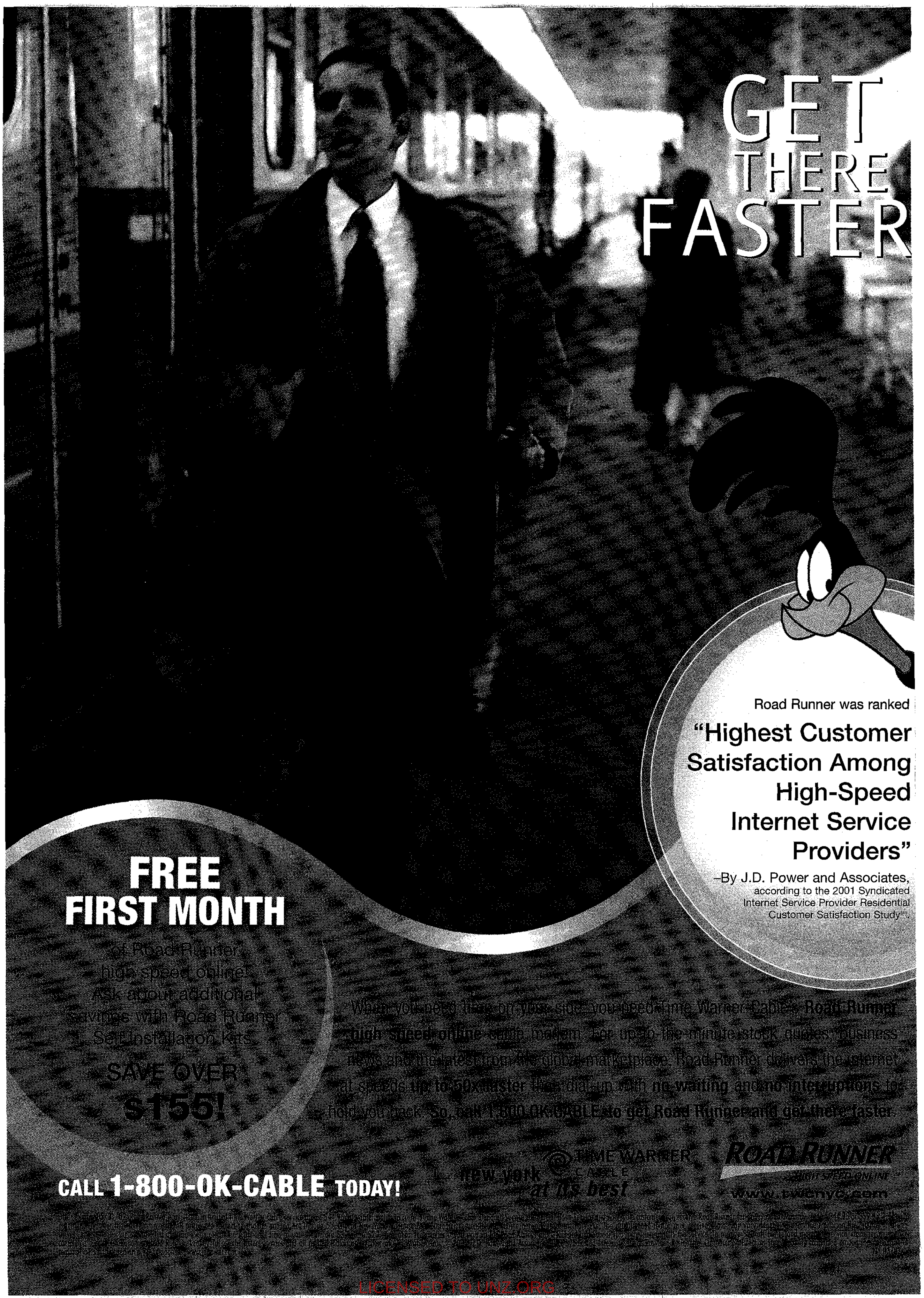

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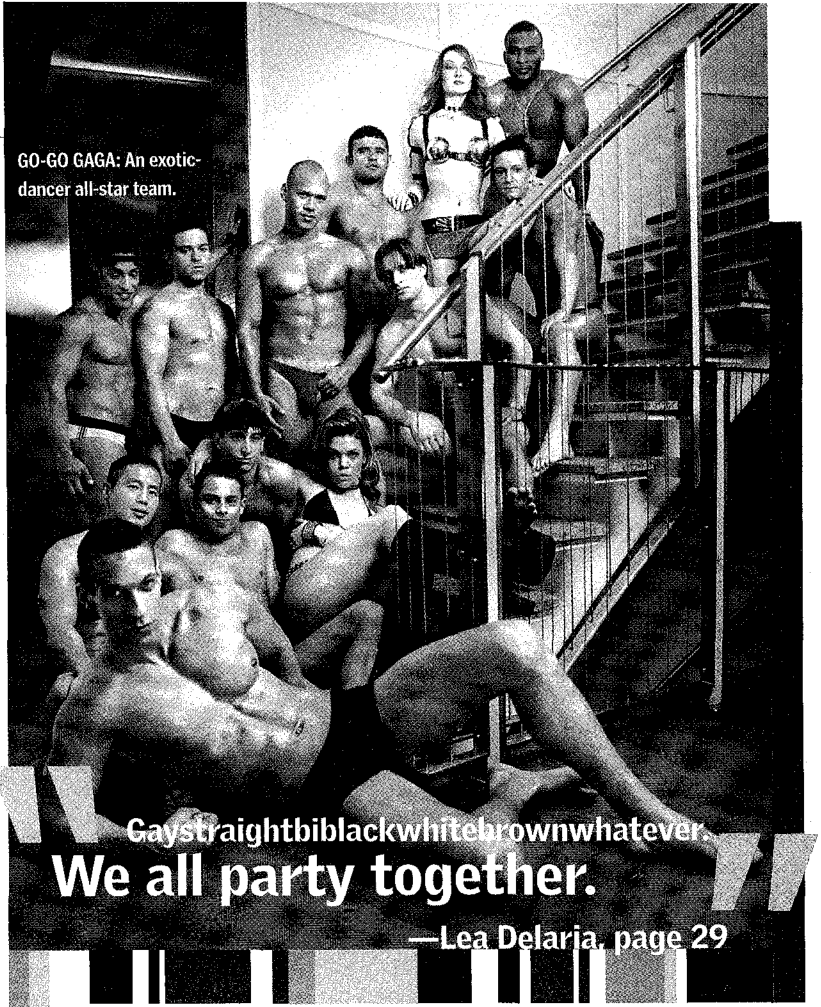

GO-GO GAGA: An exotic-dancer all-star team.

"Gaystraightbiblackwhitebrownwhatever. **We all party together.**"
—Lea Delaria, page 29

GAY LIFE NOW .02

24 **Folk Hero** *Young, gay, and famous,* Queer as Folk's *Randy Harrison, who lives in the East* Village when the show's not shooting, is one of Hollywood's few successful talents who actually started out, well . . . out. Closeted stars and starlets take note: He's not exactly hurting for female fans.

26 **Straight Talk** By Simon Dumenco In this queerest of cities, "straight" has lost its meaning. Then again, so has "gay." So where does that leave the gay community? Anxious—perhaps too anxious—to regain its edge. **PLUS: Unqueerest Folk:** The twenty-five straightest people in town.

28 **Gay Kids Today** By Rory Evans New York's gay teenagers are coming out earlier and earlier, despite the fact that it can take just as much courage (depending on what planet your parents live on) to come out in the West Village as it does in Montana. **PLUS:** Some of our favorite queer and queer-friendly celebrities pick **The Best of Gay New York.**

35 **Crystal Clear** By Ethan Brown Why crystal meth—and the unsafe sex and addiction that can follow in its wake—may be the community's next four-alarm crisis.

38 **The Go-Go Chronicles** By Derek de Koff Our intrepid connoisseur tracks down New York's hottest exotic dancers and gets them to tell—if not show—all.

40 **Ask, Tell** By Danny Roberts For the ex-*MTV's Real World* member and his military boyfriend, Paul, hiding their relationship was a way of life—and of survival. Now, with Danny off the show and Paul out of the service, the exclusive story of what "Don't ask, don't tell" was *really* like. **PLUS: A Gay-Culture Cheat Sheet.**

ON THE COVER: PHOTOGRAPHED BY BOB FRAME.

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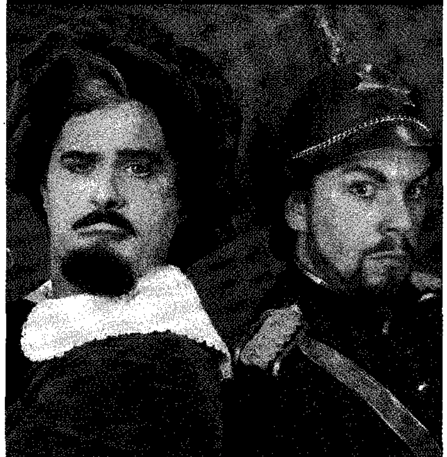

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Letters

FEMA to the Rescue

I would like to clarify an issue raised in Chris Smith's article on the state of the Fire Department ["The Smoldering Fires of 9/11," March 18]. The department has fully committed itself to replacing more than 90 fire trucks, ladders, ambulances, Suburbans, and other vehicles lost on September 11, at a cost of $47 million. These costs will be absorbed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which has so far contributed more than $15 million to this end. The city's Urban Search and Rescue unit—New York Taskforce One, which the article cited as losing $1.8 million in equipment—was organized by the City of New York and has been financially supported by FEMA. Some of the unit's equipment was destroyed in the attacks of September 11, and we have been given assurances by FEMA that they will replace more than $800,000 of the equipment. Your readers deserve to know that both the department and FEMA have worked to bring FDNY back to full strength.

John Norman, BATTALION CHIEF, FDNY SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND, BROOKLYN

Rap's Frugal Roots

Sean "Puffy" Combs is only a tiny part of the "apocalyptic" condition in the music biz ["Gotham: Puffed Out," by Ethan Brown, April 8]. But there is absolutely no excuse for spending more than $100,000 to produce and record a rap record, much less the $2 million to $3 million Combs is spending. The point of making rap music in the first place was to make records in a cost-effective and "underground" way as an act of rebellion against the major record labels.

Plex Barnhart, ATLANTA, GA.

Free Advice

Without putting too fine a point on it, I think the word *briefly* should have been inserted in the sentence "the third earl of Albemarle . . . freed Cuba from Spanish rule in 1762" in your article on the earl and countess of Albemarle ["Posh Spice," by Amy Larocca, April 8]. Though the earl did free Cuba from the Spanish in 1762 during the Seven Years War, they quickly took it back, and it was not until the Spanish-American War that the Cubans were truly liberated. In fact, under the earl's tenure, the slave trade flourished in Cuba, so just whom, exactly, did he free?

Jim Charlton, MANHATTAN

Bunny Love

Thank you so much for your "Rabbits Redux" article ["Gotham," by Rebecca Segall, April 8]. I own two rabbits and love them dearly, but like any pet, they require care, love, and attention. Though adorable, rabbits are high-maintenance pets, just like cats and dogs. I hope your piece will educate people about responsible rabbit ownership, so that fewer will be abandoned.

Elizabeth Stellato, BROOKLYN

What Am I, Poached Liver?

In reference to Mark Strausman's recipe for Italian-Jewish-style brisket ["Freeing the Seder," by Gillian Duffy, March 25–April 1]: In order for chicken livers to be kosher, they must be salted and broiled, not poached as he stated in his recipe.

Lisa Baer, RIVERDALE, N.Y.

Corrections: In the April 8 issue, "Intelligencer" reported that Sheldon Solow was in talks to buy the estate of the late Dudley Roberts. This is not the case. Also, in a photograph in the April 22 issue, Mason Adams was incorrectly identified as Sam Robards ("Cue Theater: Fortunate Son"). *New York* regrets the errors. ■

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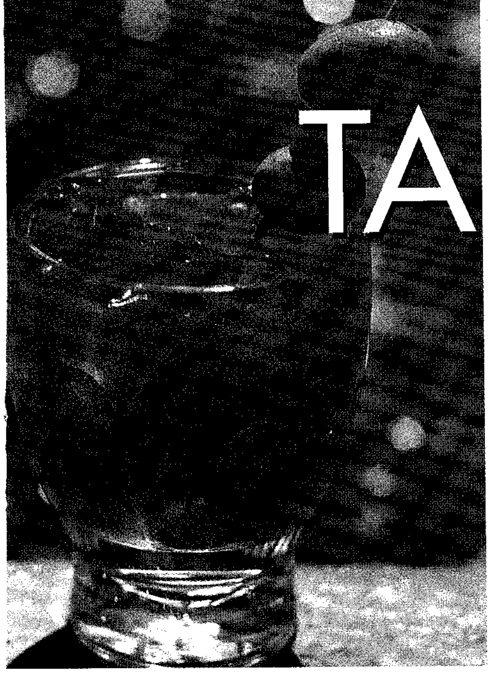

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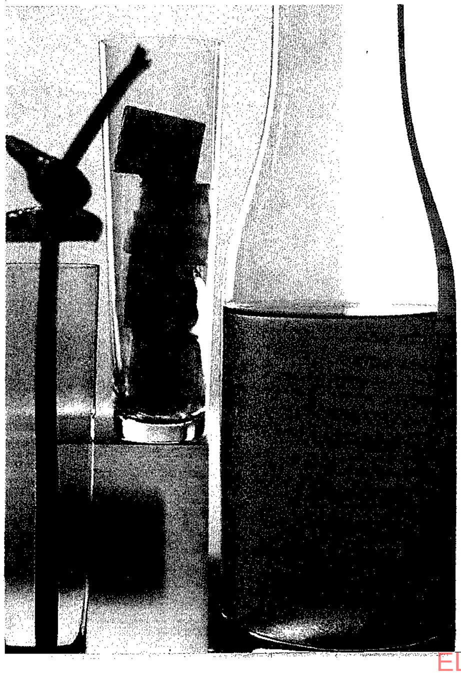

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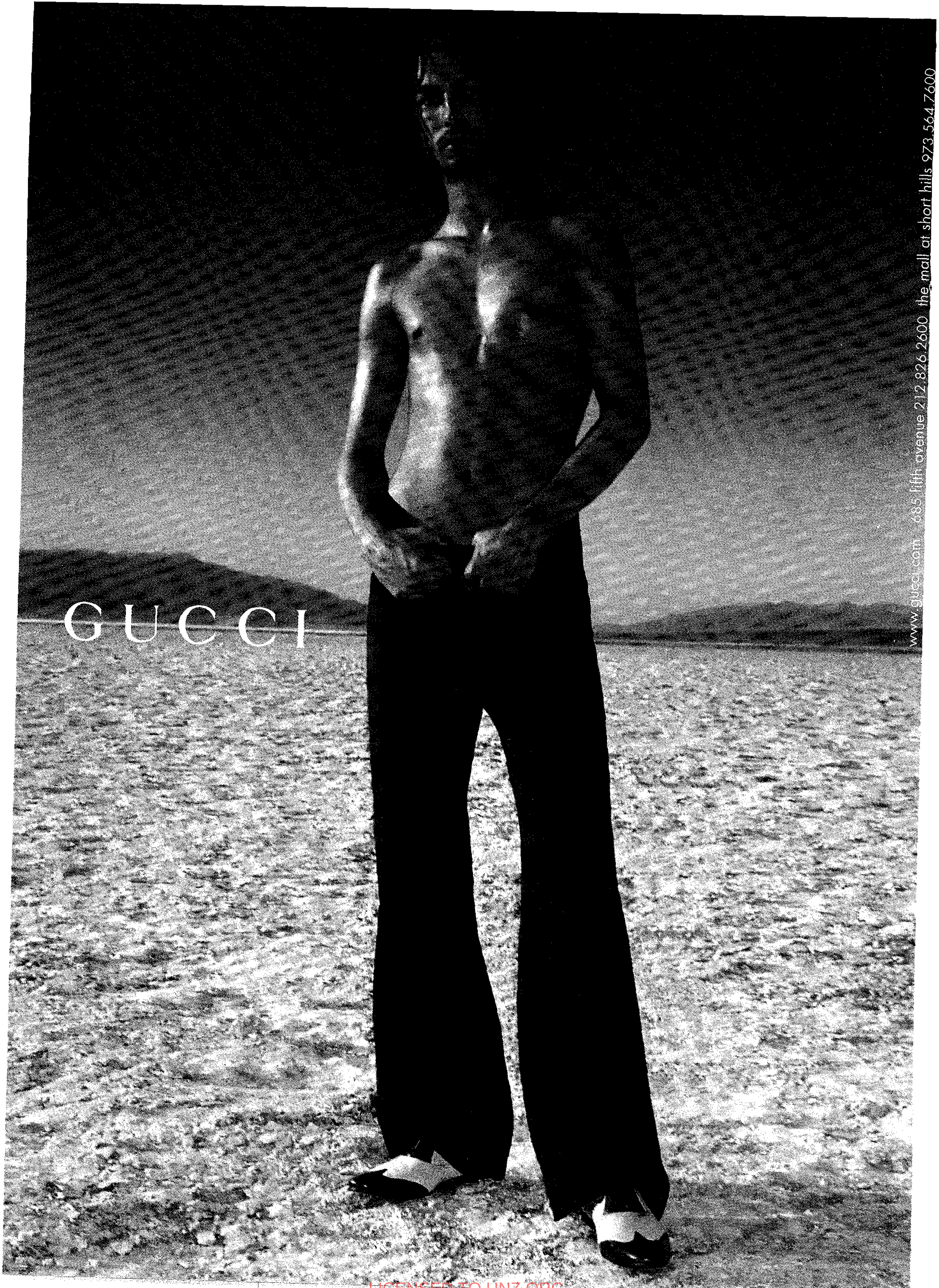
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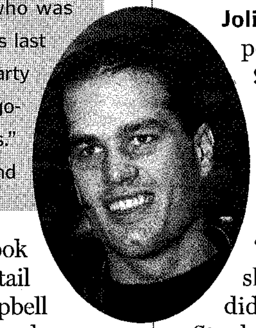
By Marc S. Malkin

'N Sync: It's Gotta Be You, and You . . .

'N Sync boys **JC Chasez** and **Chris Kirkpatrick** couldn't decide which woman they liked best during some recent partying at Cream on the Upper West Side—so they settled for a harem. A fellow clubgoer tells us that while the two were holding court in the club's VIP area, they started pointing at some scantily clad females gyrating on the dance floor. Their burly bodyguards were then instructed to bring them over. “Each guy picked out three different girls,” our clubgoer reports. Most of the attention was given to one woman dressed in a fishnet unitard, a bustier, and hot pants. “She was dancing on the tables,” our spy says. “And there were girls dirty dancing and touching each other.” As the lights went up at about 4 A.M., everyone piled into a couple of Lincoln Navigators after the 'N Sync–ers were heard talking about continuing on at a suite at Trump International. Where was **Britney Spears**'s ex, **Justin Timberlake**? He only stayed at the club for about 45 minutes, but as “Page Six” reported, he and **Lance Bass** were later spotted licking whipped cream off female patrons at Brother Jimmy's on the Upper East Side.

Mariah Calls the Play

Mariah Carey raised some eyebrows in Boston recently when she was spotted bumping and grinding on the dance floor with New England Patriots quarterback **Tom Brady** (pictured). The pop diva, in a slinky little black dress, got cozy with the 24-year-old MVP of Super Bowl XXXVI at the pre-graduation bash she threw for her cousin **Shawn McDonald** at Anago on April 13. McDonald, the 25-year-old Harvard law student who was named one of *People* magazine's Top 50 Bachelors last year, introduced Brady to Carey shortly after the party began. “They were definitely flirting,” a fellow partygoer tells us. “They were deep in conversation for hours.” Carey's no stranger to sports-star romances. She and **Derek Jeter** had a short-lived fling in 1998.



Tony Blair Cooks Up a Ruckus

When **Tony Blair** calls, people cook. Well, at least London bad boy chef **Gordon Ramsay** does. Ramsay, author of *Just Desserts*, was in New York recently to join *Kitchen Confidential* author **Anthony Bourdain** for a book signing and cocktail party at the Campbell Apartment in Grand Central Terminal to benefit the Windows of Hope Family Relief Fund. But just hours after landing here, Ramsay got a call from Blair's office. The prime minister wanted Ramsay to cook dinner for him and some friends at his restaurant in Claridge's hotel back in London. Ramsay jumped on the next plane—while organizers of the fund-raiser were left scrambling to call the 200 expected guests to tell them the event was postponed indefinitely.

Nude, or Something Like It

Melissa Errico wasn't too thrilled when she learned she had to do a bedroom scene in *Life or Something Like It*, the new romantic comedy starring **Angelina Jolie** and **Ed Burns.** She persuaded director **Stephen Herek** to cast her husband, sports broadcaster **Patrick McEnroe,** as the man under the sheets with her. “I didn't want some skanky guy that I didn't know, so I told Stephen that I had a naked man waiting back at my hotel,” Errico tells us. Herek even decided to give McEnroe a couple more scenes as—what else?—a sports broadcaster. “He loved it,” Errico says. “He didn't have to do anything except make out with me and do a quick sports broadcast.”

SOPRANO SINGING DUET: *Sopranos* star **Jamie-Lynn Sigler** is off the singles market. Sources on the L.A. set of the recently wrapped *eXtreme dating,* an indie comedy film starring Sigler, **Amanda Detmer**, **Devon Sawa**, and **Andrew Keegan**, tell us Sigler has quietly been dating her manager, **AJ Discala.** Sigler's rep confirms that the relationship—he's been her manager for about two years—turned romantic a few months ago.

With Catherine Townsend.

Guy Ritchie Snatches Man From Scam Artist's Clutches

Mess with film director **Guy Ritchie** (pictured) and expect to hear from him. **Adam Atkinson,** a musician in Barbados, was recently contacted by a casting agent who said he was working on Ritchie's new movie. The agent explained that Ritchie's wife—that would be **Madonna**—saw Atkinson on a BBC reality show about the hotel where his band, Desire, performs, and she told Ritchie he should consider Atkinson for his flick. Atkinson immediately sent off his head shot, but things got fishy when the agent explained that Atkinson would have to pay for his trip to London for the audition and that he should send him a check for $5,000. Through some friends, Atkinson reached one of Ritchie's assistants, who quickly figured out that the so-called casting agent was a scam artist. But it didn't end there. When Ritchie was told the story, he gave the crook a call. “Guy pretended to be *my* agent,” Atkinson tells us. “He strung him along for a good five minutes. But then he said, ‘Do you know who I am?’ The guy said no. And then Guy goes, ‘I'm Guy Ritchie.’ The guy just shat himself and hung up.” No one has heard from the scammer since. On a happier note, Ritchie did ask Atkinson to send along his head shot and promised to consider him for future projects.

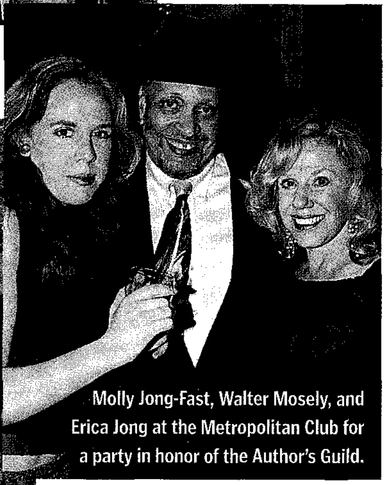
PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE.COM; STAN HONDA/AFP GAMMA; DAVE BENETT/GLOBE PHOTOS.

Scene

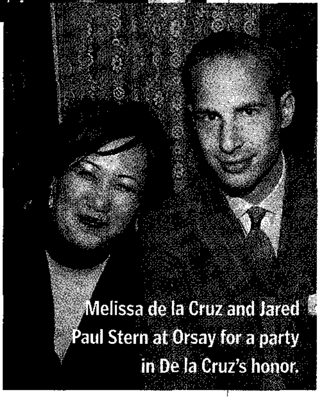
Mary Tyler Moore and Sofia Coppola at MOMA for a party honoring the work of David O. Russell.

Julie Taymor, Gina Gershon, and Nora Ephron at Le Charlot following a screening of *Unfaithful.*

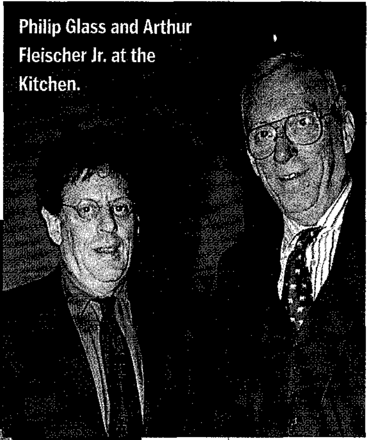
Bart Freundlich and Billy Crudup at Serena.



Molly Jong-Fast, Walter Mosely, and Erica Jong at the Metropolitan Club for a party in honor of the Author's Guild.

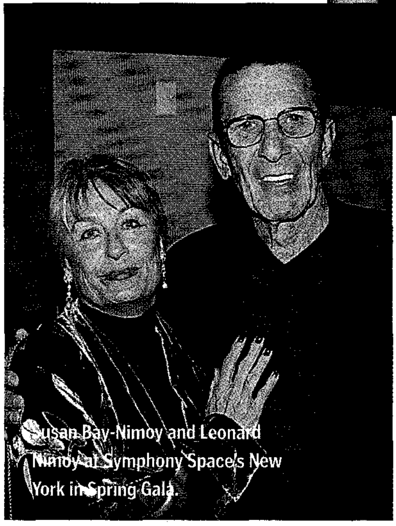


Melissa de la Cruz and Jared Paul Stern at Orsay for a party in De la Cruz's honor.



Philip Glass and Arthur Fleischer Jr. at the Kitchen.

Alicia Silverstone and Samantha Mathis at Tavern on the Green celebrating the opening of *The Elephant Man.*



Susan Bay-Nimoy and Leonard Nimoy at Symphony Space's New York in Spring Gala.

Tommy Tune, Lucie Arnaz, and Marvin Hamlisch at the Waldorf Astoria for the American Theater Wing Gala.

Kitchen Confidential

The Tribeca Rooftop was filled on April 15 with a mix of artists and corporate bigwigs. Which made sense, considering the event was the thirtieth-anniversary benefit for the Kitchen, the experimental-arts space in Chelsea. "I don't do one creative thing in life," admitted lawyer **Arthur Fleischer Jr.**, who was being honored for his support, as he squeezed past **Fred Schneider** and **Ingrid Sischy** to snag some tuna tartare. "Except maybe tell a tall story from time to time." Composer **Philip Glass** was worrying about his role as master of ceremonies. "I'd much rather just be up there playing the piano," he said. "I find almost anything easier than actually having to talk to people." DAVID AMSDEN

World Cup

Later that night at Serena, Hollywood types toasted director **Bart Freundlich** on *World Traveler*, a film about a womanizer played by **Billy Crudup. Alicia Silverstone** was happy to relax on her day off from *The Graduate*, until, that is, the paparazzi found her. "Please tell me that's the last picture," she politely repeated. "You're gonna make me spill my wine." Meanwhile, Freundlich didn't seem to mind that girlfriend **Julianne Moore** (who stars in the film) didn't come to the party. He had a fine date in his mother, who made it clear that she had no trouble with her son's writing a movie about a less than savory man. "Believe it or not," she said, "mothers have dark sides, too." D.A.

Photographs by Patrick McMullan

HBO FILMS PRESENTS

ALBERT FINNEY
AS WINSTON CHURCHILL

VANESSA REDGRAVE
AS CLEMENTINE CHURCHILL

SOME MEN
ARE DESTINED
TO BE
LEADERS.

The
GATHERING STORM

HBO FILMS PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BBC FILMS A SCOTT FREE PRODUCTION A FILM BY RICHARD LONCRAINE ALBERT FINNEY VANESSA REDGRAVE "THE GATHERING STORM" JIM BROADBENT LINUS ROACHE LENA HEADEY TOM WILKINSON DEREK JACOBI RONNIE BARKER MUSIC BY HOWARD GOODALL COSTUME DESIGNER JENNY BEAVAN EDITOR JIM CLARK PRODUCTION DESIGNER LUCIANA ARRIGHI DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY PETER HANNAN BSC CO-PRODUCER SUE BERGER PRODUCERS FRANK DOELGER DAVID M. THOMPSON CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER LISA ELLZEY EXECUTIVE PRODUCER FOR THE BBC TRACEY SCOFFIELD EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS RIDLEY SCOTT JULIE PAYNE TONY SCOTT SCREENPLAY BY HUGH WHITEMORE STORY BY LARRY RAMIN AND HUGH WHITEMORE DIRECTED BY RICHARD LONCRAINE

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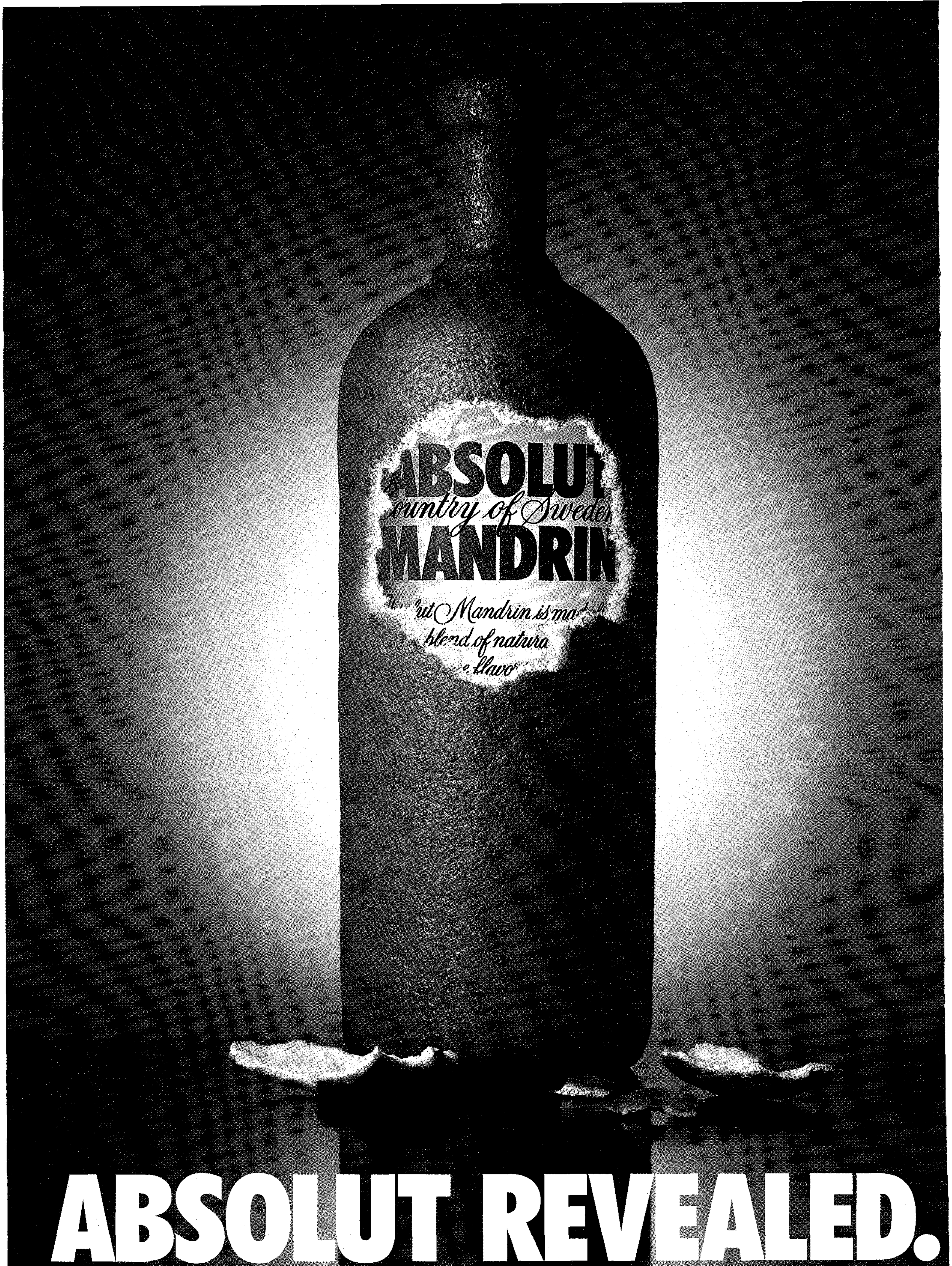

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Its competition is murderous—John Steinbeck

GOTHAM

Life in the New City

Fashion Police

Vintage dealers are not only fashion's new detectives; they also control the inspiration supply. By Amy Larocca

TASSEL-FOR-TASSEL: Nicolas Ghesquière has often looked to the past for inspiration. Here's his take on the Victorian era.

Poor Nicolas Ghesquière. After it was revealed earlier this month that the beautiful boy wonder at the head of Balenciaga had copied the most photographed showpiece of his spring collection—a vest—tassel-for-tassel, some people assumed he would become the Doris Kearns Goodwin of the fashion world.

Who busted Ghesquière? It was a 22-year-old vintage dealer, Sameer Reddy, who stumbled on a photo of the original, identical vest, by hippie designer Kaisik Wong, who died from an AIDS-related disease in 1990. Reddy's ability to detect even the most oblique of references makes him one of a new elite corps of fashion cops—enforcers of the industry's institutional memory. Mark Walsh, another vintage dealer, loves to point out who got what from where. "Didn't those vests look like that 'Wearable Art' that Cher used to wear in the seventies?" he exclaims, poring over the Flokati-rug affairs from Ghesquière's fall collection.

The word on the street is that, in fact, Ghesquière was looking for Wearable Art for years, but dealers didn't want to sell it to him. The notion of a designer armed only with a sketch pad is largely a myth. It may come as a shock to customers, but most designers regularly dispatch staff worldwide to scour vintage depots in search of inspiration. (The fashion world is stalled in a staunch postmodernism, where success is measured in the ability to synthesize various influences and make them commercially viable.)

These designers buy up bags, belts, or even a coat and then limit their pilfering to the details: the stitching here, perhaps, or a buttonhole there. But they usually stop a hemline short of producing a direct copy.

Which raises another point: Vintage dealers not only spot the knockoffs but also control the inspiration supply. Walsh, for example, is particularly choosy about who gets access to his fabulously comprehensive collection of twenties and thirties dresses. "I wouldn't sell most people a Vionnet dress," he sniffs, "because I know the degree to which it's going to be abused." He even rejected one designer who begged to sketch a Vionnet dress because, he explains, "her stuff is, like, *soooo* ugly."

Seth Weisser is co-owner of What Comes Around Goes Around, a vintage store in SoHo that keeps a separate showroom exclusively for design teams. "Remember that Celine double-wrap belt with the metal on the outside? The original was from us. It's exactly as it was," he claims. Naturally, Weisser plays favorites. "When the good stuff comes in, there are about five designers who get the call."

Of course, as much as they enjoy their detective work, the dealers also understand that fashion, as Reddy puts it, is all about "cloaking yourself in familiar imagery."

Walsh points to John Galliano, who he claims used the copying process to perfect his craft. "He used to do line-by-line copies of Poiret and Chanel dresses," says Walsh, "but now it's so totally deconstructed and synthesized that it doesn't look like anyone but him."

And, with a wink, they know where to look next.

"Every time the Fashion Institute of Technology or the Met does a big show, everyone just copies it," says Leslie Chin, Walsh's partner. He refers to the Bonnie Cashin retrospective at FIT two years ago; Cashin vastly influences Marc Jacobs, Michael Kors, and, by proxy, just about everyone else.

So if you want a head start on fall 2003, just think Joan Crawford, as the Met plans its Gilbert Adrian retrospective. "Coming soon," cries Chin. "High Hollywood glamour!"

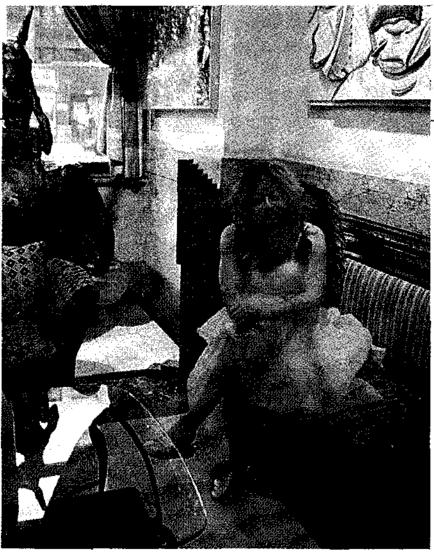
PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, E. O. HOPPE/CORBIS; FIRSTVIEW.COM

Angels With Dirty Faces

An angel has moved into the Chelsea Hotel. "I was at the front desk when he appeared, wings and all," says Stanley Bard, the hotel's proprietor. "We get a lot of Hollywood personalities, and I thought he was in a play. He didn't appear drunk or on drugs, and he picked a room because he liked the number."

Last week, the angel whiled away an evening in the hotel lobby. He wore silver-gold slippers, a pearly antique wedding dress, a dorsal bow, and brand-new wings that, in the opinion of the hotel security guys, were a lot better than the plumage he first turned up in. The new wings were just over a foot long and had neat rows of white feathers bordered by a fluffy white trim. Every time somebody opened the hotel door, the fluff trembled like sea anemones. "I own three sets of wings, all custom-made," he said before confiding that "wings are cheaper now than they used to be. They're down from $150 a pair to $86 at Religious Sex, in the East Village. This suggests that more people are buying them. Maybe in two or three years, angels will fill the streets of New York."

Close up, the angel, a 42-year-old Japanese man, was scruffy. His half-orange, shoulder-length hair was unkempt under his tiara, and his silver fingernails were unevenly varnished. A shadow of stubble showed beneath his face powder. He was at all times soft-spoken and courteous. When a transient—the hotel's term for by-the-night customers—inquired, "Are you flying tonight?," the angel smiled politely. "I do have ambitions to, but I don't actually believe I'm going to. I'm not cuckoo."



The angel has been in and out of town since the eighties. He supports himself by his writing, which he says is published in Japan. About three years ago, he had a breakdown and wound up hospitalized but discovered life was more bearable when he dressed as an angel.

At first he wore black wings, black plastic pants, and futuristic black boots. "People from around Great Jones Street would remember me as the black angel," he says. Then he decided to add red and white to his wardrobe.

"People are nice to me," he remarks. "I was in Williamsburg when a man, possibly insane and homeless, offered me the food he was eating. Then today, I went to a copy shop and I wasn't charged." And it was true that everyone walking through the hotel lobby seemed delighted to see the angel. He says, "I think I'll wear my costume for the rest of my life. It has a healing effect on others." JOE O'NEILL

Real Estate

Boards Get Stiff

April is the season for letters from elite gatekeepers, when words like *wait-list* start peppering teen vocabularies—and this year, parents are going through the same sort of painful wait for approval. Economic fears are driving co-op boards to new levels of pickiness, making it harder to get into the Dakota than into Dartmouth. "A board is a little leery that somebody's working for a company that might not be around next week," says real-estate lawyer Marc Luxemburg of Snow Becker Krauss P.C. "If someone who's received a big bonus wants to rush out and buy the most expensive co-op they can, the board is going to say, 'I want to see a track record.' "

Co-ops were already tightening up during the boom, worried that new money was risky. "They learned their lesson in the late eighties," says Carol Ott, editor-in-chief of *Habitat* magazine. "Boards allowed a lot of financing, and they ran into problems. Shareholders lost their apartments." In this bad economy, though, they aren't bending the rules to boost sales—they're clamping down "to be careful that prospective shareholders don't overextend themselves," says Mary Ann Rothman, executive director of the Council of New York Cooperatives and Condominiums. "People lose jobs."

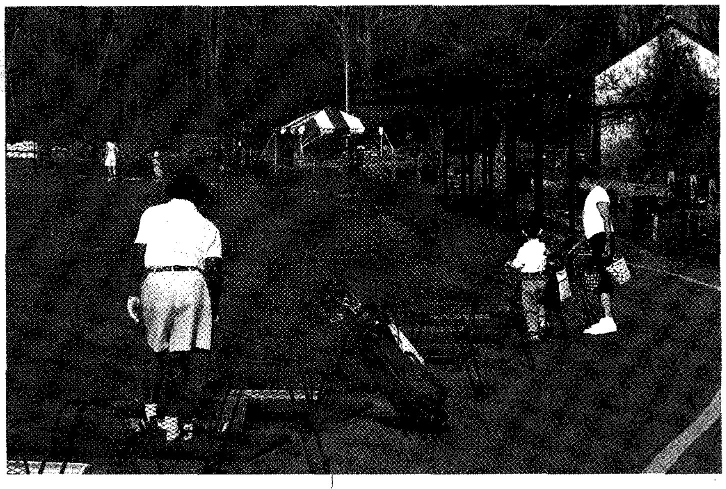
Or is that just an excuse to say no? "There's no legitimate reason to turn someone down who's already been approved for a $600,000 loan," says Halstead broker Robin Horowitz, who sells downtown with her sister Nancy, about a recent non-sale. "It has to be something personal. This particular building wanted a family, and this was an unmarried couple."

"They call it a financial thing," agrees Corcoran's Tami Shaoul. "It has to be, otherwise it's discrimination. They look for the Goldman Sachs type—we have to bring in someone who fits that mold. It used to be an Upper East Side thing, but it's all over the city." And the private investor and his family who were bounced—without a word—from a $3 million Park Avenue co-op last winter? "Their liquid assets were five or six times the value of what they were purchasing," says their frustrated broker, Corcoran's Marie Schmon. "They've even got great reference letters."

Still, all but the iciest buildings know when to say yes. "When boards are really ruthless, turning down everyone or making people wait forever, brokers don't want to deal with them," says Charles H. Greenthal's Margo Goodale, adding that a shopper can always just buy a condo. "They're devaluing the apartments. You want brokers to like your building." JOY ARMSTRONG

PHOTOGRAPH: TOP, LINDA TROELLER. ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT DeMICHIELL.

Teed Off in the Hamptons



The summer season opened last week with the perfect spectator sport for South Fork folks: a multisided development battle complete with million-dollar lawsuits and high-profile players like Ronald Lauder.

Now the Southampton Zoning Board of Appeals has to referee the parsing of “miniature golf.” Does the proposed expansion at the beloved Poxabogue Golf Course—beyond enlarging the existing driving range from 61 to 85 tees and amping up the parking lot by as many as 50 more spaces—constitute a “miniature-golf course” or merely a golf course that is miniature?

Miniature golf! The very idea of it sounds grotesquely “up-island” to the defiant band that makes up East End Property Owners. “They’re calling it ‘reality golf,’ but miniature golf is miniature golf,” says Jean Sinenberg, a member of the association’s board who lives around the corner from Poxabogue, with a snort. “It attracts a very different crowd from golf.” Sinenberg was still reeling from the $1 million lawsuit PGC Property had filed against her—and each of her fellow board members—just one hour earlier.

To complicate matters, Ron Lauder, the cosmetics heir who owns the farmland opposite the course, has also waded in. He clearly finds the mini-golf plan baffling, since his own efforts to donate land just across the street to Itzhak and Toby Perlman’s music school were torpedoed by preservationists three years ago. Received with open arms by Shelter Islanders, the school and its much-attended concerts are now thriving.

“Whatever you call it, miniature golf has evolved a lot,” says Jeff Shulman, the chief operating officer of PGC Properties, which bought the 40-year-old public course in 1998. “This is a realistic putting course. It won’t feature the Coney Island image with dragons and windmills. It will have state-of-the-art synthetic turf!”

The contest isn’t as simple as whether one approves of miniature golf. The tangle over the golf-course expansion (and its impenetrable zoning questions) is only one part of the hubbub. PGC also maintains that the owners’ association has repeatedly misrepresented PGC’s plans by exploiting Hamptons bugaboos—garish lights and traffic. And the lawsuit accuses the opposition group of setting up a mischievous Website full of anti-PGC propaganda using the name Poxabogue.org (uncannily close to the golf course’s own Website, Poxabogue.com).

EEPO board chairman Peter Wadsworth, a former Kidder, Peabody & Co. investment banker, scoffs at the notion that the golf course owns the name Poxabogue. “The name dates back to the 1800s, at least. There’s a Poxabogue Lane, a Poxabogue Pond, a Poxabogue Cemetery . . . ”

In the coming weeks, the game will tighten as the matter progresses through the boards and courts. The media will cover the meetings; the Candy Kitchen will fill with gossip. Just as with the Mets versus the Yankees, it’s rich versus richer. ALEX WILLIAMS

Q&A Buddhism Is the New Black

James Truman, editorial director of Condé Nast, recently made the news after emerging from a monthlong search for enlightenment. But reports of the legendary *bon vivant* closeted in a Buddhist monastery were greatly exaggerated.

So the papers got it wrong. Where *did* you go?

I was living in a cabin outside Woodstock, New York, working with two teachers. The practice was fundamentally Buddhist—Tibetan, not Zen—but not monastic.

What were you escaping from?

To the contrary, it was about giving up the familiar escape routes: no entertainment, no Internet, no shopping, no gossip, no drinking, no parties, no tirami su at Da Silvano.

What were you looking for?

An end to the boredom of tired routines.

How did your daily rituals differ from a typical day at 4 Times Square?

I got up at four and went to bed at nine, which are not exactly my New York hours. Office life is driven by drama—the succession of daily crises. Here there were none. In their absence, I paid intense attention to all the details, including my liking for drama.

Did you miss the cafeteria?

Daily, and sometimes hourly.

How much media did you consume?

None at all.

What did you read?

I had a reading list of two books, *The Places That Scare You* by Pema Chodron and *Consciousness Speaks* by Ramesh Balsekar. Plus some poetry by Rilke and Rumi.

How did your boss, S. I. Newhouse, react to your decision to take a month’s retreat?

He was curious and supportive.

What did you learn from the experience?

A modest lesson in spaciousness, clarity, and kindness.

How might Condé Nast—and the media world in general—benefit from a little Buddhist awareness?

It is not Buddhist awareness, it is awareness, period. I believe that comes with or without a mystical wrapping. My experience of New York, and the media-fashion world in particular, is that it offers a seductive invitation to get lost in the distractions of glamour and status and nonstop work. Until you step outside it, you can forget the benefits of fresh air.

What did you think of the *Post’s* doctored picture of you as a shaven-headed monk?

It eased my anxiety about going bald. ROBERT KOLKER

PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP, GORDON GRANT; BOTTOM, FRANK W. OCKENFELS/CORBIS OUTLINE.

Michael Wolff THIS MEDIA LIFE

The New Old News

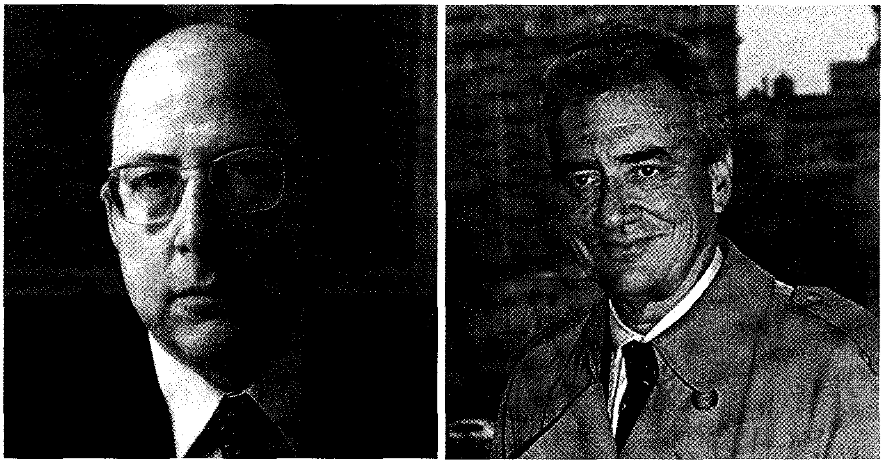
With the *Journal*'s new look, the *Times'* new section, and the New York *Sun*'s exercise in journalistic nostalgia, newspapering is suddenly hot. Is there a future on paper?

IN MY LIFETIME, MOST NEWSPAPERS IN THIS country have closed or been merged out of existence. It's true that many of the remaining ones, often holding a monopoly in their communities, have made big profits, but that's because their owners have pulled cash out and invested very little back in (when you visit newspapers around the nation, you step into time warps of superannuated pay scales, furniture, and technology—always with a portrait of the founder in the lobby). Owners, quite reasonably, don't want to reinvest because their readers are aging so inexorably—virtually no one under 40 has a daily newspaper "habit." If you own a newspaper, you can foresee its almost-certain end.

But some people, because they are captive to a family patrimony, or because they believe in the business myth of the last man standing, or because they are hopeless sentimentalists, persist in newspapering. Hence, the launch of the New York *Sun* last week, the recent addition of pastel colors to the *Wall Street Journal*, and the debut of a new section—"Escapes"—at the New York *Times*.

In the case of the New York *Sun*, the crotchetiness of its editorial views and style is perfectly expressed by the fact that it is a newspaper. The very notion of launching a daily metropolitan broadsheet is a militant statement of old-fogy-ness (certainly, its founder, Seth Lipsky, is the old-fogy-est guy in town). It's deep nostalgia. The *Sun* even tried to rent the offices of its namesake paper, which ceased publishing in 1950 (merging with the *World Telegram*).

In fact, although the paper looks old, with the slightly awkward wingspan of a broadsheet and a boring, or unedgy, pretelevision sort of presentation, it is not old-fashioned in any way. The paper is really a cleverly postmodern thing. It's media for media. The *Sun* aims to be of interest, or amusement, or annoyance, to other people in other media, through whom it will have its voice reflected and amplified.



THE NEW TRADITIONALISTS: Seth Lipsky of the New York *Sun* and Howell Raines of the New York *Times*.

The *Sun*'s pre-launch publicity is almost up there with *Talk* magazine's—another publication that, of course, had no prospect of financial success. The paper, which hopes to have 25,000 to 35,000 subscribers by the end of the year, gains most of its stature because of an investment by the former Canadian newspaper mogul Conrad Black. His few million dollars of support (Lipsky claims to have raised $20 million, whereas bringing a daily general-interest paper in New York to profitability might reasonably be thought to cost something like a few billion) translate into a story about a world-famous press lord launching a newspaper in New York.

Black has tried to break into New York on two prior occasions: first when he failed in his bid for the bankrupt *Daily News* in 1992 (Mort Zuckerman, a real-estate mogul, might have known less about newspapers, but he knew more than the hapless or clueless Black about negotiating with newspaper labor unions and won the bid); and next when he agreed to buy the New York *Observer*, abruptly backing out of the deal at the last second. But the *Sun* does not appear to be such an effort. In fact, more than plunging into new newspaper ventures, Black appears to be getting out of the business. He has recently been wrapping up his Canadian enterprise (which has suffered big losses) and, having relinquished his Canadian citizenship, decamped to London, where, courtesy of the queen, he's suddenly Lord Black of Crossharbour.

The launch of the *Sun*, which hopes to propound a certain order of political and cultural conservatism—an anti–Britney Spears, pro–Ronald Reagan–ness—seems rather like a way for both Black and Lipsky to be in the newspaper business, and to get a seat at the media table, without really having to be in the newspaper business. Likewise, we other media people also have the vicarious thrill of a new newspaper in our midst—with the so-far-undelivered promise of barking-mad columnists and a certain school-boys-showing-off provocativeness, even a kind of English newspaper style in New York—without really having any new competition. It could be great fun for everyone.

MEANWHILE, THE ONLY TWO TRULY OLD-FASHioned moneymaking newspapers in the city, the *Times* and the *Journal*, are trying to create the opposite illusion from the one the *Sun* is seeking. They don't want to be old-

PHOTOGRAPHS: LEFT, MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT, MARINA GARNIER/GLOBE PHOTOS.

fashioned newspapers at all, but information brands, sensibility vehicles, targeted upscale-consumer media outlets.

They both (along with their cheesier cousin, *USA Today*) want to be America's national newspaper (even though there has historically never been such a thing, nor is there much indication of demand for such a thing).

Indeed, the *Times* and the *Journal*, which have always coexisted in the same demographic group with easy equanimity, increasingly find themselves as each other's most direct competitor. One possibly lively result of what many newspeople see as both papers' emphasis on ever-more banal magazine-y, lifestyle-y, service-y sections is an old-fashioned newspaper war.

The common wisdom in the newspaper business is that there is room for only one newspaper in a community. That wisdom may now be revised to one newspaper for the country—or at least one per economic group. The battle that has been joined is for the hearts and minds of the 2 million or 3 million wealthiest and best-educated people in the nation, and the sense of how to wage this fight, beyond complex distribution strategies and enthusiastic use of color presses, is to become the voice of the more or less generic good-suburb sensibility (personal finance, technology, self-help, health care, travel, lawn advice).

In the past, you might have had journalism purists in bitter, if mostly ineffective, opposition to this largely marketing-driven view of newspapering. But there's very little of that now: Any journalist with any career prospects is also a marketer, and packager, and all-around design- and demographic-conscious media professional. Every journalist is also a worried journalist, united with the business side in concerns about "being viable."

Indeed, while many people might argue that the *Journal* has become the most consistent high-standard news organization in the nation, possibly the true paper of record, it is its "Weekend Journal" section, with its emphasis on leisure and real estate, that has drawn the most attention and come to define the ambitions of the paper.

The section has been the triumph of its creator and editor, Joanne Lipman. The new front-page palette, the two-column head, and most of all the new service section, "Personal Journal," are even being called the Lipmanization of the paper. She is the paper's tonal revolutionary—dramatically shifting the paper from its traditional white-shirt sensibility to a new leisure-time, lifestyle-plus gentility (the *Journal*'s editorial page looks more and more like a vestigial condition). Depending on whose theory you're listening to, and which camp at the *Journal* it's coming from, Lipman is either the inevitable replacement to the longtime, well-loved editor, Paul Steiger (she's the villain and vulgarian), or his instrument (underneath his unassuming demeanor, he's revealed himself to be the true vulgarian). Or she may be both.

The *Times*, of course, has been trying to achieve a more national tone—less Washington–New York—and a more advertiser-friendly design for years. But the launch of "Escapes," a soft-focus paean to places other than New York (you'd be hard-pressed to find even passing reference to the city in the new section), may be its most calculated and brazen effort to achieve national genericness (even "Circuits," the *Times*' other substandard section, at least had the rationale of the digital bandwagon to justify its launch).

"Both papers are deeply insecure about the choices they've made, **embarrassed to be publishers in a mogul** world, envious of electronic scalability and ubiquity."

The dedicated commercialism of "Escapes" as well as the paper's national strategy are part of the next-generation ambitions of the paper's restless publisher and CEO, Arthur Sulzberger Jr., who seems determined to set a new course for the future (he tried the Internet and has of late been flirting with television) as soon as possible. His ability to set this course and implement new plans has probably been enhanced by the appointment of his own editor, Howell Raines (the former editor, Joe Lelyveld, tended to treat the younger Sulzberger with a certain condescension and barely veiled disdain for his next-gen ambitions).

Indeed, Raines, who in recent weeks has been trailed around the *Times* building by media Boswell Ken Auletta, for a lavish profile in *The New Yorker*, may be the *Times* editor, more than any other in the paper's history, most expected to combine (even embrace) business concerns with editorial ones. Likewise, Sulzberger himself may be the publisher, and the Sulzberger, most actively engaged in the editorial direction of the paper.

Nothing is very sacred, in other words.

IT IS ODD, THOUGH. BOTH THE *TIMES* AND THE *Journal* (or its parent, Dow Jones) have remained, obdurately or stupidly, print companies. They took the road less traveled than that of the other media giants. In the little more than ten years that Time Inc., for instance, transformed itself from a magazine company into a cross-platform colossus, the *Times* and the *Journal* remained frozen in time.

Now, though, it is possible to argue that the *Times* and the *Journal*, no matter their own business worries, or even the growing geriatricity of their customer base, are in qualitatively better shape than their media-behemoth brethren. It is possible that they have been far-seeing rather than retarded. It's even possible that sticking your head in the sand is a pretty good strategy.

Each company is a powerful niche media play. Each dominates its traditional market. Each has a hold on its audience dramatically greater than the hold any other consumer medium has on its audience. And the *Times* and the *Journal* brands are (unlike, say, AOL) true brands—as distinctive and beloved products as you're likely ever to find.

Still, both organizations are deeply insecure about the choices they've made, embarrassed to be publishers in a mogul world, envious of electronic scalability and ubiquity, tempted by media deal-making culture (the *Times* and the *Journal* have, on many occasions, tried to diversify but have almost always failed). What's more, they both fear, as much as anyone, for the future of newspapers. In some sense, what they are trying to do with their redesigns and new sections and dreams of national upscale monopolies is to imitate the media big-boy approach—to expand their franchises, extend their brands, follow their audiences, achieve scale and ubiquity, reinvent themselves.

It is not unlikely, however, because they are newspaper people, and, by long tradition, terrible business people, that they are exactly missing the point of what's going on. That a newspaper, with an identifiable and loyal audience, is smart stuff. That locality, and specificity, and personality, are soon to be all the rage. That a simple media company is better and more valuable than a complicated one.

Which is why, unlikely as it seems, Seth Lipsky may be onto something.

As the media business is more and more engulfed by self-doubt, as AOL Time Warner becomes the next corporate punch line, as the notion of size and scale and reach and footprint becomes just so yesterday, newspapers could come back again. It's always possible. ■

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Michael Tomasky THE CITY POLITIC

The Action Figure

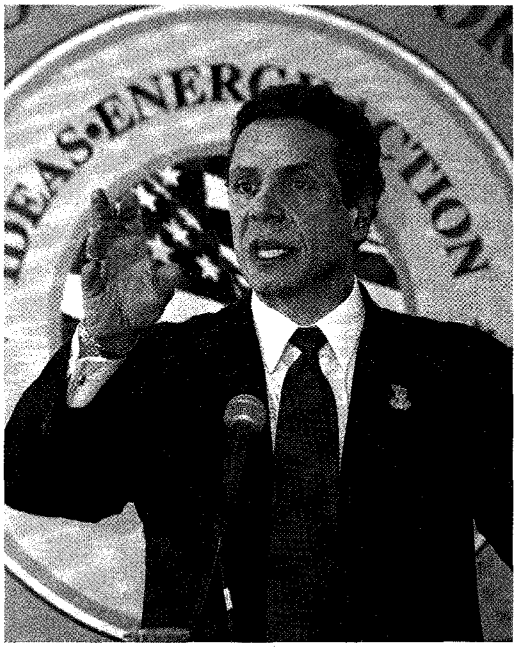
Announcing his candidacy for governor last week, Andrew Cuomo pitched the themes of his campaign—and promptly stuck his foot in his mouth. Which image will prevail?

WATCHING A POLITICIAN ENGAGE IN A LONG-term, high-publicity campaign is, these days, chiefly a matter of watching him wrestle his demons to the ground. We may talk more about positions and issues—although with each passing election cycle, this is less true—but positions and issues are window dressing, and in any event are already largely fixed in place when the campaign begins. What we learn over the course of a campaign is the quality of the candidate's moral and emotional fiber, and usually, enough of us make our decisions based on that to swing the matter in one direction or the other.

It follows that this prism inevitably favors certain types and disfavors others. Conventional wisdom says the worst thing a candidate can be is complicated. Think Al Gore here. It's uncomplicated that the voters want, or so the media high priests tell us; people without scars, burdens, or doubts (usually these also happen to be politicians who can't sustain an unscripted thought past three sentences, which is somehow considered a plus). Think Mike Bloomberg, George Bush, and, of course, George Pataki.

But there have been many occasions when complicated has held the trump card. Here we conjure up Rudy Giuliani, both Clintons, in their different ways, and Mario Cuomo. Which mood will obtain this year? If he succeeds at nothing else, Andrew Cuomo—who announced his candidacy for governor last week and immediately made his task, well, complicated by virtue of some remarks he tossed George Pataki's way about September 11—will have helped us settle that question.

GENESIS HOMES IN EAST NEW YORK IS ONE OF those low-slung, post-Corbusian housing complexes whose very suburban-ness, which we would ordinarily find off-putting and sterile, seems instead an oasis of serenity when surrounded by rotting warehouses and tenement projects. Andrew Cuomo's organization, HELP, built this place. It's no wonder that he wanted to show it off by announcing his candidacy here, and no wonder that he wanted Cornel West and Russell Simmons at his side. It was, as these events go, comparatively genuine, and even glimpsing the back of Ethel Kennedy's tousled head—Bobby's widow and Andrew's mother-in-law, sitting quietly in the front row—was enough to summon some friendly ghosts from days when a liberal candidate could say the L-word without fear of penalty.



NOT YOUR FATHER'S POLITICIAN: Andrew Cuomo formally announces his candidacy for governor.

Cuomo spoke for half an hour. I could quote him at length, but the decontextualized printed page doesn't do him justice. This guy has *got* something. He's not warm and soulful, like Bill Clinton; he's full of sharp edges. But the edges are part of his energy, and if there's one quality that just explodes out of him, it's energy. Indeed, it's his slogan: "Ideas. Energy. Action." On the banner behind him, and on the side of his bus. With bullet points. For emphasis.

Aides will tell you that the "energy" and "action" parts are subtle messages of contrast to Pataki, a governor not known for burning the midnight oil, and Comptroller Carl McCall, Cuomo's primary opponent and a man many regard as passive. Yet I couldn't help but think that, whether it was considered or not, those two words had another implied message.

Andrew Cuomo has months to defeat his own demons, whatever they may prove to be. But first, circumstances being what they are, he has to shoot and bag his father's. Mario was great—without contemporary equal—on ideas, but something short of that on energy and action. He was too Jesuitical and inward; qualities that may have made him a good man, but didn't make him an activist governor. There was an old joke in Albany after Mario, in his 1988 State of the State Address, declared "The Decade of the Child." The punch line was, "but he didn't mean *this* decade."

So Andrew, before he gets to Pataki and McCall, has to persuade Democrats that he's not the old man. That he is not, I have little doubt. His manner, and his record at HUD, where he improved the nation's public-housing stock while cutting the agency's size, persuade me that one malady he does not suffer from is his father's internal conflict (no Hamlet he). However, as he showed the day after the Brooklyn announcement on the press bus near Buffalo, he may have other problems.

I'M SURE THAT BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, Cuomo will have been lustily denounced

PHOTOGRAPH BY AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS.

by every columnist and editorial writer in the state for telling reporters last week that Pataki "was not a leader" after September 11. So let's first state the obvious: It was a dumb mistake. It got him well off message. It brought Rudy Giuliani out to link arms with Pataki, something Giuliani under normal conditions is loath to do. If Cuomo defeats McCall in the primary, the Pataki commercials that will be used against him could be scripted by a child: a firefighter's widow, eyes tearing up before the camera, saying something like, "I have news for Andrew Cuomo. You better believe George Pataki is my leader!"

So it was a major tactical blunder. But it was not, as some would have it, a *moral* blunder. First of all, though no one will say this publicly, there *was* some private snickering after the Trade Center attacks about Pataki's public posture, which often consisted of tossing in his two cents after the mayor had finished his lengthy soliloquies. Second, there was Pataki's clumsy request of Washington for $54 billion in post-attack relief—the infamous rail link to Schenectady, and so on—that demonstrably hindered federal-aid efforts for a time. That ploy was not leadership at all. It was cheap-seat theater that got in the way of leadership.

Is it right that the enormity of the tragedy should insulate Pataki from having to defend that? There is a force field of civic piety, made all the stronger because it can rely on patriotism as well, around the very phrase *September 11.* Pataki, like George Bush, has benefited from it greatly. Newspapers, as guardians of the civic common denominator, have a tendency to sustain this force field. But fortunately, voters don't think like newspapers. Bush's approval rating is still high, and to read about it, you'd think that America can't wait to charge to the polls en masse to reelect him. However, his re-elect number—people who say they're planning on voting for him in 2004—is a much shakier 41 percent.

The difference between Bush and Pataki is that Bush offends many Democrats, while Pataki is as inoffensive as oatmeal, so making this charge, or any charge, stick, will be tough. But Cuomo is making an interesting gamble here, opening a line of attack as dramatically as possible and counting on the voters to make distinctions that the media as a rule do not.

Or, of course, it might just be that one of his demons is that he has a big, fat mouth. In either case, he makes things entertaining. Or you might say complicated. ■

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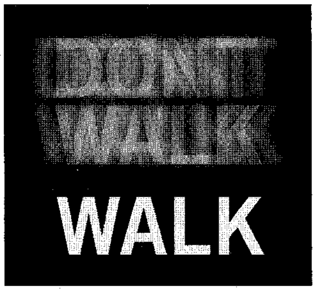

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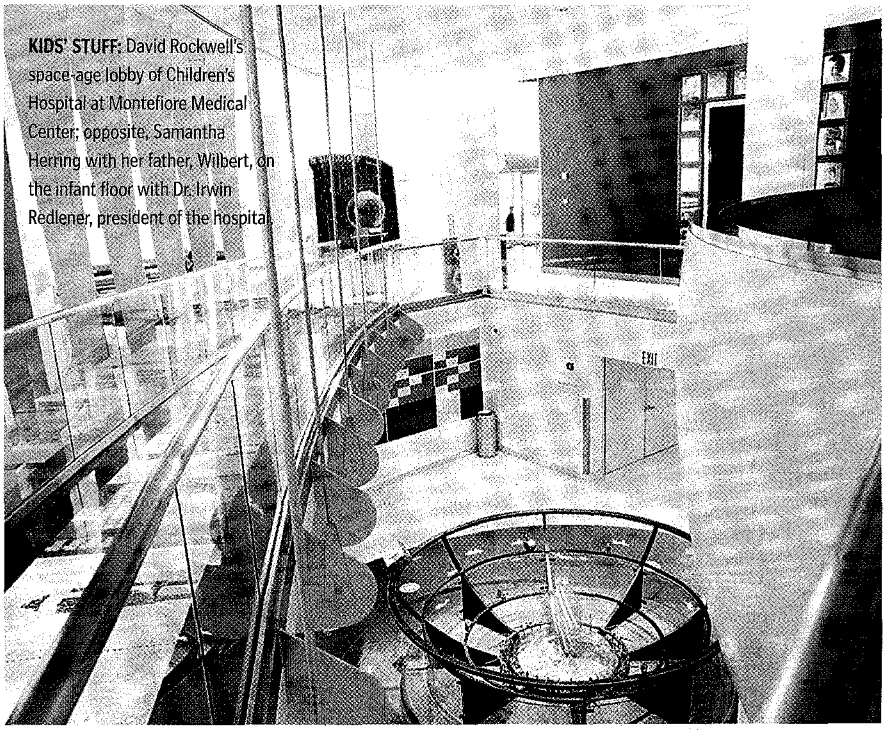
The winsome new Children's Hospital at Montefiore is attracting top doctors as well as sick kids from all over—and making many Manhattanites wonder: Where's ours?



KIDS' STUFF: David Rockwell's space-age lobby of Children's Hospital at Montefiore Medical Center; opposite, Samantha Herring with her father, Wilbert, on the infant floor with Dr. Irwin Redlener, president of the hospital.

IF, GOD FORBID, A CHILD IS GOING TO GET SICK, it'd be tough to find a brighter, more cheerful, and less hospital-like place for treatment than the Children's Hospital at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx. Designed by architect-about-town David Rockwell, the hospital, which opened in the fall near 210th Street, has DNA-strand tiles on the floor of its reception area, a biosphere, a Foucault pendulum, and a library for parents to learn more about what brought them there in the first place. Inpatients are grouped by age range rather than by ailment, and all have easy access to play-family spaces. There is a computer at every bedside, along with dioramas, exhibits, charts, photographs, and murals of flora and fauna so that children can get better—and better educated at the same time.

"Our first mission, obviously, was to provide state-of-the-art medical care and to create a space that would recognize the needs of the family and community," says Irwin Redlener, the hospital's president. "But beyond all that was the opportunity to recast what could be achieved in a children's hospital." He adds that he was guided by the philosophy and lifework of his late close friend, the populist astronomer Carl Sagan.

"I've always believed design can have a strong emotional impact," Rockwell says. "I thought about what it was like to be a child in a hospital and afraid. We did all our initial sketches from a child's point of view. Here, if you're on a gurney and look up, you see stars and birds embossed on the ceiling. Each floor has an art installation at the elevator lobby with some piece of Sagan's teachings. Each room has a symbol, like a bumblebee, rather than a number."

All of this has had a galvanizing effect on the medical community. "Graduating med students are going to Montefiore for their residency largely because of that hospital," says Wade Parks, chairman of pediatrics at NYU Medical Center. The newcomer in the Bronx has also stimulated a lot of discussion, according to Parks, about why there isn't a similar facility in Manhattan south of 168th Street, the site of the only other contender, Babies Hospital, a.k.a. the Children's Hospital of New York Presbyterian.

In fact, a midtown or downtown children's hospital was Redlener's dream in the late eighties, when he was head of ambulatory pediatrics at Cornell. "I was amazed that we didn't have any place to refer people other than Babies Hospital," he says. "I don't want to imply that it's anything but excellent, but in terms of convenience, I thought there should be a downtown hospital, and I still do. I feel uncomfortable that for people who live in lower Manhattan, it's a major hassle to go to a children's hospital, whether they should decide to come to us at Montefiore or to 168th Street."

"In any other city, if you get off the plane and tell the cabdriver, 'Take me to Children's Hospital,' they know exactly where to go. If you try that at La Guardia, no one would know what you're talking about," concedes Cynthia Sparer, executive director of Babies Hospital, who's overseeing construction of a new $120 million "family-centered" facility due to open in the fall of 2003.

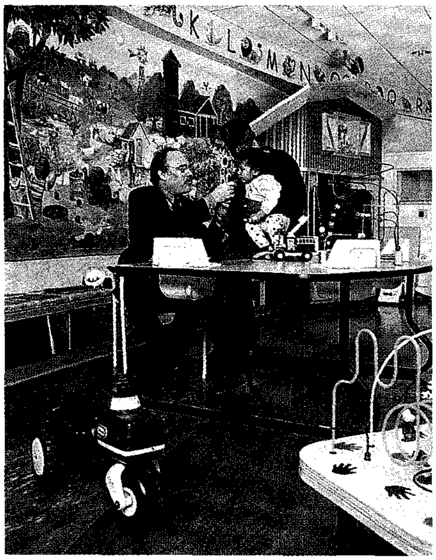
IT ISN'T THAT CHILDREN CAN'T GET A BED OR excellent care on the pediatric wards at general hospitals in town. How welcome they are to the bean counters is another matter. Kids make up the smallest percentage of admissions; caring for them contributes the least to the bottom line and is the first service to be sacrificed when there's a budget cut. Indeed, Roosevelt Hospital has shuttered its pediatrics unit altogether.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY CARLOS EMILIO.

"No one in purchasing at a general hospital starts by thinking what would be needed by children; for example, syringes appropriately sized for babies," says Ian Holzman, chief of newborn medicine at Mount Sinai and a longtime champion of a new children's hospital. "We demand things that are child-appropriate, but it's a fight. There is obviously some self-interest here"—on his part, he means—"but we think services are best given to children in a hospital *for* children."

At a children's hospital, all the social workers are oriented to kids and their families; the equipment is appropriately scaled. There's also the critical mass of patients necessary to attract top medical talent. "The reality," says Redlener, "is that it's harder to recruit pediatric subspecialists if you're not recruiting them for a children's hospital."

WHICH BRINGS US BACK TO THE MANHATTAN project. Build it and they will come—from Manhattan, Queens, and parts of Brooklyn, according to Holzman's demographic research. There are just a few things holding up the groundbreaking. First, no one's got a clue about where that ground can or should be. On the campus of a medical center? Which one? Or on some neutral territory? ("Think the Arab-Israeli conflict," says one Mount Sinai doctor.) But pin the lion's share of the delay on the usual suspects: money, of course, and politics.



"If you don't have an average daily census of more than 200 children, you're not going to sustain a freestanding children's hospital," says NYU's Parks. And unless institutions like Mount Sinai, NYU, and Lenox Hill decide to consolidate, that's not going to happen. The construction of another children's hospital in Manhattan would mean closing pediatrics units at the partnering hospitals and, of course, coping with metastasized egos. "Everybody has a job and a title and a hat and a uniform, and no one wants to give that up," says Holzman.

He may look with envy at Montefiore, where, even in a none-too-healthy climate for health care, the medical center's CEO, Dr. Spencer Foreman, gave the nod to the $120 million children's-hospital project, and where two trustees each gave $10 million to get the ball rolling. A clutch of other donors, among them Sagan's widow, Ann Druyan, and the singer Paul Simon, each ponied up $1 million, because they "had a connection to the Bronx because they were born and raised here," says Redlener, "or were attracted to the idea of doing something spectacular for kids in need in one of the most medically underserved areas in the United States."

Manhattan, too, has its underserved areas, believes Ramon Murphy, a popular Upper East Side pediatrician. "Accessibility is important," he says, "and Babies Hospital is just too far away."

"We have a strong relationship with families who need access to what we provide, and we believe our location is just not an impediment," Sparer counters, adding that the hospital's volume has increased dramatically over the past few years. "The $120 million we're spending for the new facility is going to services," she adds, some of which will be focused on education, though nothing patterned on Montefiore.

"The reality is that if you look at major cities where children's hospitals are located, they're out of the business district," Sparer notes. "If your child needs a transplant or neurosurgery, 40 blocks is not going to make a difference."

IN THE EIGHTIES, WHEN REDLENER AND HIS team were talking up a children's hospital in central Manhattan, they found little enthusiasm for the idea among their colleagues. "I talked to a bunch of potential donors who could help seed the project," he says, "but administrators weren't interested. They said the pediatric departments at the other hospitals wouldn't go along with it."

That was then. Now Mount Sinai says it's game and is looking to team with erstwhile merger partner NYU. "This hospital does very high-tech pediatric things like bowel and liver transplants," says Holzman. "We have the second-largest cardiac service in the city. NYU has had a lot of neurosurgery and neuro-oncology.

"Yes, there are people who don't think we need another children's hospital," he adds. "They're at Presbyterian." ■

Joanne Kaufman's columns can be read online at nymetro.com/archive/Kaufman. **Search our Best Doctors list** at nymetro.com/bestdoctors.

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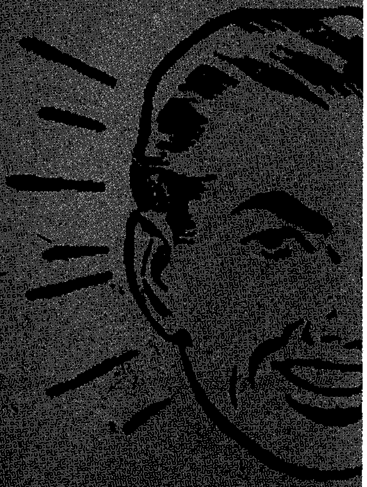


WHERE TO MEET WOM

WHERE TO MEET MEN

WHO USED TO BE MEN

THE POST-GAY GAY ICON

He's hot, he's talented, and he's out. No surprise that *Queer As Folk* star Randy Harrison has legions of fans. But who'd have guessed how many of them would be women?

SINCE THIS IS THE GAY ISSUE, AND RANDY HARRISON IS ONE OF the stars of the gayest show on TV, Showtime's *Queer As Folk*, we might as well get the gay question out of the way.

Which, actually, is exactly what Randy Harrison has done. "I told my close friends and my parents when I was 16," he says. And then he did something else: Unlike most gay actors, he never bothered to go back into the closet.

"I had a conversation recently with these gay movie producers about how in Hollywood pretty much everybody behind the scenes is out. But the actors still aren't. In a way, it just seems like it's too late for established actors to come out, because they've been part of the illusion, this mass manipulation, for too long." The machinery is still grinding away, says Harrison. "In L.A., people's publicists package them with other people to create the appearance of a relationship—they call the press and say, 'Be outside this restaurant at this time and you'll see this actor and that actress, and they're *together*.' Once you're caught up in that, you're fucked."

"How many people have done what Randy's done?" asks Ron Cowen, the co-executive producer, with Daniel Lipman, of *QAF*. "In terms of gay history, how many actors at 24 years old are out and are as successful and in as visible a position as Randy is? I can't think of any. In a way, he's a first."

NOW LET'S GET THE "IS HE ACTING OR JUST PLAYING HIMSELF?" question out of the way. Short answer: He's acting.

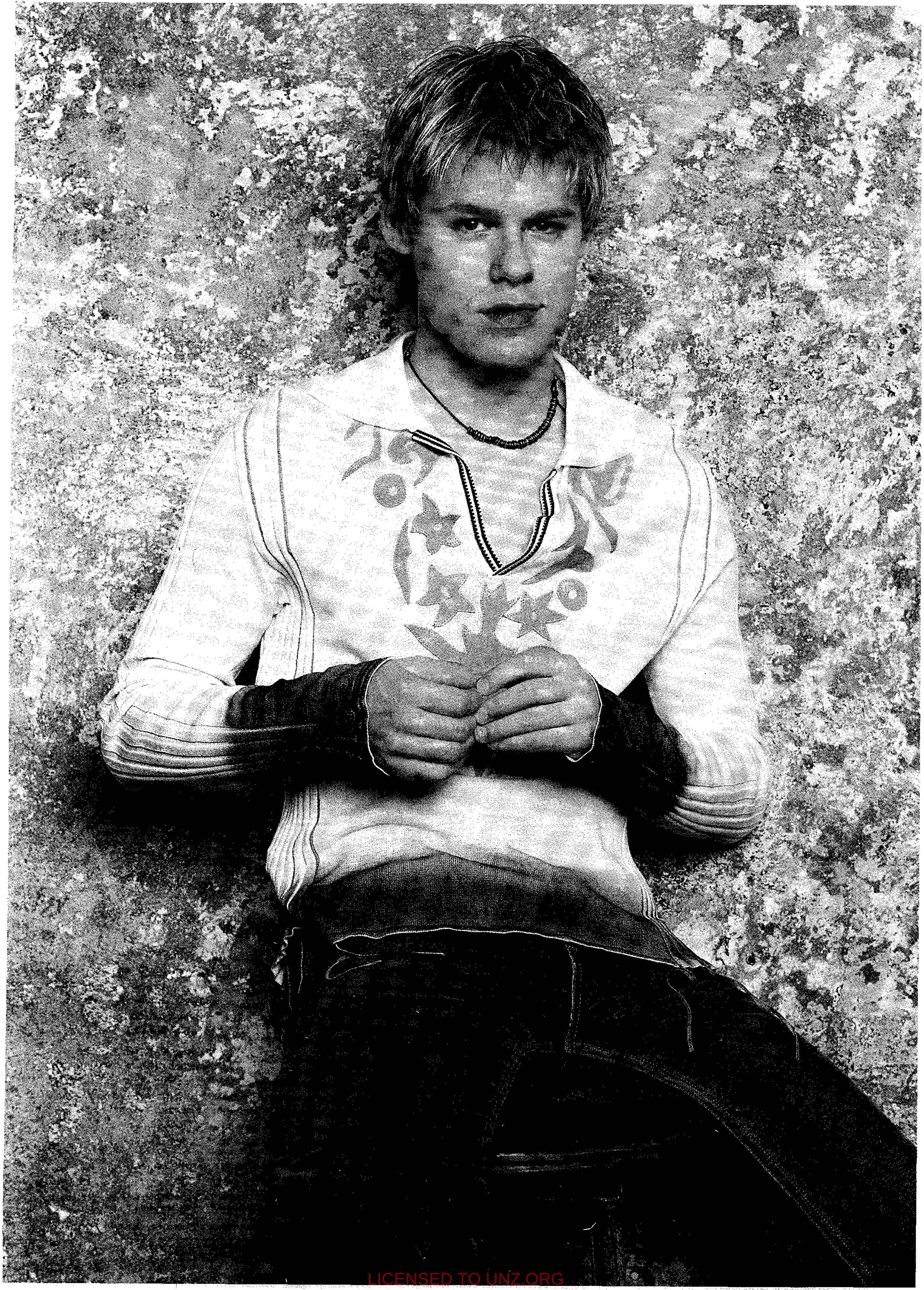
Queer As Folk, for the uninitiated, shows a particular slice of gay culture: the sex-crazed, club-hopping milieu. For this reason, it's both loved (for its frankness) and hated (by those who think it reflects badly on the gay community). But when Harrison—who lives in the East Village when he's not shooting in Toronto—first got the part, he actually had to do *research* on gay nightlife: He went to Splash in Chelsea, "because I really hadn't been to a lot of gay clubs. I've always felt like a dork in gay clubs. Like I don't have the body thing, and I'm not *into* the body thing. And the first gay bar I ever went to when I was living in Atlanta, I felt more isolated than I ever have in my life. I thought, *My God, is this internalized homophobia? Is this self-hatred?* Eventually, I realized I'm just a gay man who hates dance music." (Harrison's partial to the White Stripes, Clinic, early Bowie, Lou Reed.)

In person, Harrison is quietly intense, and his look—wire-frame glasses, an exceedingly bland tan sweater, unremarkable jeans—is so understated that it doesn't even qualify as geek chic. On *QAF*, Justin's nickname is Sunshine because of his generally cheery disposition—though that's been changing a bit lately. In this, *Queer As Folk*'s second season, Justin has gotten more nuanced: He's been recovering from a brutal gay-bashing in last year's finale.

"His character is taking some turns now," says Sharon Gless, the Emmy Award–winning actress (*Cagney & Lacey*) who plays the proud-mom-of-a-gay-son on *QAF*. "And sometimes I like just standing back and watching him work. Randy is a phenomenon." Gless says Harrison recently filmed a scene in which his character displays a dark edge. "The transformation he did from being this sweet child to being cold—*cold!*—was astounding. And I thought, *Oh, my God, this kid is good.*"

NOW LET'S GET THE PERSONAL- AND PROFESSIONAL-HISTORY STUFF out of the way. Randy Harrison was born in New Hampshire, but his family moved to Atlanta when he was 11. (His dad is the CEO of a paper company; his mom's "a thwarted artist and a genius"; his older brother is a bank manager.) The acting thing happened in preschool: "My parents couldn't find a baby-sitter, so they brought me to a production of *Peter Pan* when I was 5. I was transfixed. I knew I wanted to be onstage after that."

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BOB FRAME



> "I've always felt like a dork in gay clubs," says Harrison. "Like I don't have the body thing, and I'm not *into* the body thing. And the first gay bar I ever went to, I felt more isolated than I ever have in my life."

His gay-style résumé has always been paltry. "I was *so* grunge in high school. I wore huge flannels and Doc Martens and cords." Post–high school, he survived the brutal (and renowned) theater program at CCM, the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music, even though he wasn't exactly popular with the faculty. (The program director boycotted his rebel production, with a group of fellow students, of *Shopping and Fucking*.)

He moved to New York, and then, having never before appeared on-camera, got cast in *Queer As Folk* after one audition and two call-backs.

"Thank God they were desperate," he says of the *QAF* producers.

NOW LET'S GET THE INSTANT-FAME THING OUT OF the way. Here is the typical fan reaction—not just to Harrison but to the entire *QAF* cast—according to Harrison's co-star Peter Paige: "Obsessed! Screaming, crying, 'Ohmigod, ohmigod!' "

If you're picturing hysterical homosexuals, think again, because that reaction actually comes from teenage girls, says Paige. And lots of older women, too (though they're not nearly as rabid).

It's a weird quirk of mainstreamed gay culture that *QAF* is a hit with straight women. At a recent first-season-DVD-signing session at the Lincoln Center Tower Records featuring Harrison, Paige, and co-star Gale Harold, "it was like 'N Sync or something," says Harrison. "I think we signed 700 or 800 boxed sets." At $90 a pop.

OKAY, THE GRAPHIC-SEX THING. IT'S TIME TO GET *that* out of the way—because *QAF* really *can* be steamy, at least as steamy as, say, *Sex and the City*.

Harold, the straight actor who plays Justin's boyfriend, Brian, says, "A lot of it happens in editing, although Randy and I are certainly making out and simulating sex. We're comfortable enough with each other to be able to give them enough raw material, you know what I mean?"

For his part, Harrison says, "The sexuality required for the role never scared me at all."

AND THEN, FINALLY, TO BRING THINGS FULL CIRCLE, let's get the future out of the way. As in, does an out-at-24 actor have one?

Apparently, yes. Next week, previews begin for the MCC Theater's *A Letter From Ethel Kennedy*, directed by Tony winner Joanna Gleason. It's Harrison's New York stage debut. And later this year, he plays the "head of a group of total outcasts" in *Bang Bang You're Dead*, a scathing Showtime movie about high-school violence.

It's a breakthrough role for the breakthrough actor because Harrison's character is straight.

"I'm still associated with the gayest show on TV," he says, "but the fact that I got the coming-out over with means the gay-actor thing will be on the back burner. At some point it'll be, 'He came out so long ago nobody even cares anymore.' " ■

IS STRAIGHT OVER?

As a sexual orientation, no. As a city lifestyle, possibly. But, asks Simon Dumenco, where does that leave gays?

ONE OF MY FAVORITE LETTERMAN ROUTINES INvolves Dave going shopping at a Manhattan store called Just Bulbs, where he proceeds to torture a salesclerk by asking for anything *but* bulbs. What he really wants, he says, is a certain kind of lampshade. After repeatedly deflecting Dave's queries with a terse cheerfulness, the exasperated clerk finally barks, "We don't *carry* shades—just *bulbs*." So Letterman sweetly asks where he might find a shade.

"Well, I suppose at a store called Just Shades," his unwitting foil responds.

Cue a shot of the storefront of Just Shades (yes, it actually exists—on Spring Street, on the Lower East Side). It's classic Letterman: found comedy, where reality—or surreality—is the punch line.

I thought of the Just Bulbs–Just Shades routine recently when I heard the news that Viacom is developing a gay-and-lesbian cable channel. To me, that's a punch line, too: Just Gays.

Twenty-four hours and 365 days a year's worth of same-sexiness? Now, there's an idea so cutting-edge it sounds practically . . . Canadian! Yes, it turns out our neighbors to the north have already been there, done that: There's a seven-month-old Toronto-based all-gay cable network called—*ugh*—PrideVision, with shows like *Dyke TV* and *Frisky Femmes*.

Even worse, *we've* basically been there, done that, too: There are, of course, plenty of queer characters on American TV (from Malcolm's geeky gay pals on *Malcolm in the Middle* to the sensitive gay desk assistant on *NYPD Blue*)—and many of them are rather interesting and complicated. And there even seems to be room for serious, politically charged pro-gay programming: HBO and NBC aired competing Matthew Shepard movies last month.

In fact, queerness is so pervasive—the embrace of gay style and sensibility is omnipresent not only on television but in the culture at

PREVIOUS SPREAD: GROOMING BY JOE SIMON/NEXT; STYLING BY SAMANTHA STRAUSS; SHIRT BY ROBERTO CAVALLI; JEANS BY MARC JACOBS; NECKLACE BY PAUL SMITH.

large—that it prompts the question: What's left that's truly hetero? Never mind Just Gay. What's Just Straight?

The easiest answer is that if something is aggressively un-gay, or anti-gay, then it must be straight. But of course that's the wrong answer. It's taken for granted, for instance, that the notoriously homophobic world of rap music is ultra-hetero. But it turns out that what P. Diddy really wanted to do when he grew up was break into fashion(!). Andre from OutKast—who has the most flamboyantly perverse style sense since Prince—went and wore that crazy-ass dress at the Grammys; Lil' Kim is, for all practical purposes, a drag queen. Ghetto fabulous is, after all, fabulous, and the defining gesture of the rap repertoire is still the lusty crotch grab. Art hasn't been this phallocentric since Robert Mapplethorpe.

IF IT'S NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO THINK OF ANY GROUPS that are entirely un-gay, it's even harder—in New York, at least—to think of any *individuals* who are. Right now I'm doing a mental inventory of my heterosexual friends, and "straight" almost universally fails as a designation. I've got an SMWAAROONM buddy (Straight Male With an Apartment Right Out of *Nest* Magazine). And an SFBWMOWUT girlfriend (Straight Female but Would Make Out With Uma Thurman). And an SMWARDW college roommate (Straight Male With a Really Dykey Wife). And an SMWGHWMAAFD neighbor (Straight Male Who Gets Handsy With Me After a Few Drinks). And so on.

Polymorphous sensibility, if not polymorphous sexuality, is now the norm. In New York City, pure, unbridled, good old-fashioned heterosexuality can seem actually *peculiar*. It's the exception, not the rule.

> **Polymorphous sensibility, if not polymorphous sexuality, is now the norm. In New York City, good old-fashioned heterosexuality can seem actually *peculiar*. It's the exception, not the rule.**

Gay creative types have been whining for years about how gay culture has been losing its edge. In fact, it hasn't been lost—it's been appropriated. "Breeder culture" cheerfully submitted to insemination by gay culture, garnering wit, wisdom, and wardrobe tips from the nonreproductive class.

THE TRUTH IS, IT'S HARD NOT TO BE A LITTLE NOSTALGIC for the mystery, the dark edge afforded by the closet. Gay culture now is about stating the obvious. Such as *Rosie O'Donnell is gay*.

Oh.

It's rude to say it, but Rosie feels so *over* as a cultural phenomenon now that she's out. Part of what made her interesting was that she had a secret. At least when she was openly closeted, there was a bit of frisson, some intrigue to her. This is anticlimax.

For a while, I also thought it was cynical, opportunistic: *She's got a book to sell.* But then it became clear that she's actually serious about the struggle. She's a multi-millionairess talk-show queen, but she's still a second-class citizen in parts of this country. That would include Florida, where anti-gays have succeeded in classifying her as an unfit parent. She's an American icon (to millions of lumpen suburban stay-at-home moms, at least), but she hasn't forgotten she's not fully American.

Gays may own pop culture and the remaining anti-gays may be a dying breed, but they don't plan to go quietly, and they still want to fuck with us *on a daily basis*.

IT'S EASY TO FORGET THAT. LIVING AND WORKING IN New York, where so many people are, on the surface, having a gay old time, we've become sated on inclusion. Hence the impulse to reclaim the one part of gayness that the straights won't ever be quite comfortable with: the sex itself.

Earlier this month, a friend excitedly e-mailed me about "a COMPLETELY OUTRAGEOUS, history-making nightlife event" that he'd just attended: a meatpacking-district successor to a certain oversubscribed East Village party that featured "a Jacuzzi with a full orgy on the second floor flanked by cabanas stuffed with guys having sex." The bacchanalia, the first in a planned new series, surely had something to do with the continuing post-Giuliani throwing-off of shackles. And some of it is logistical: Cops, post–September 11, have rediscovered that they have more important pursuits than "chasing naked, well-hung men around a nightclub," as one promoter refers to the raids on his attempted Rudy-era parties. Back rooms are back, and go-go boys and girls are taking it off, taking it *all* off, at an increasing number of clubs.

Sometimes the wild abandon almost seems like a reclamation project. It's an awful lot of fun playing sexual outlaw—getting to feel Just Gay again. In our nightlife, we can still go where no straight person has gone before. Good for us. But in the end, it may be a distraction, a way of forgetting what's actually COMPLETELY OUTRAGEOUS: that the anti-gays think they get to control not only whom we fuck but whom we love.

We're nostalgic for the ghetto, but the ghetto isn't ours to define. ■

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THE STRAIGHT 25: NEW YORK'S *UN*QUEEREST FOLK

Is it the way they dress? The way they walk? The way they *talk*? Who knows, but there's something about these New Yorkers that's just *so* straight (not that there's anything wrong with that).

Woody Allen, director
Alec Baldwin, actor
Ol' Dirty Bastard, rapper
Steve Brill, *Newsweek* columnist
Edward Burns, actor
Roger Clemens, Yankee

Bill Clinton, ex-president
Katie Couric, *Today* show co-host
Ron Galotti, *GQ* publisher
James Gandolfini, Soprano
David Halberstam, author
Ray Kelly, top cop
Henry Kissinger, statesman

John McEnroe, ex-athlete
Bill O'Reilly, Fox News star
George Pataki, governor
Ron Perelman, billionaire
Andrea Peyser, New York *Post* columnist
Howell Raines, New York *Times* executive editor
Jerry Seinfeld, comic
George Steinbrenner, Yankees owner

Donald Trump, real-estate mogul
Harvey Weinstein, movie mogul
Jack Welch, ex-GE CEO
Dr. Ruth Westheimer, sex therapist

PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, NINA PROMMER/GLOBE PHOTOS; JOHN KRONDES/GLOBE PHOTOS; SONIA MOSKOWITZ/GLOBE PHOTOS; ALLSTAR/GLOBE PHOTOS.

GROWING UP GAY

New York may be the best place in America to come out. Which doesn't necessarily mean it's easy—especially if you're 16.

Rory Evans reports from the teen front.

FIRST, YOU HAVE TO COME OUT. WHEN DOING SO, IT helps if everyone in the car can hear.

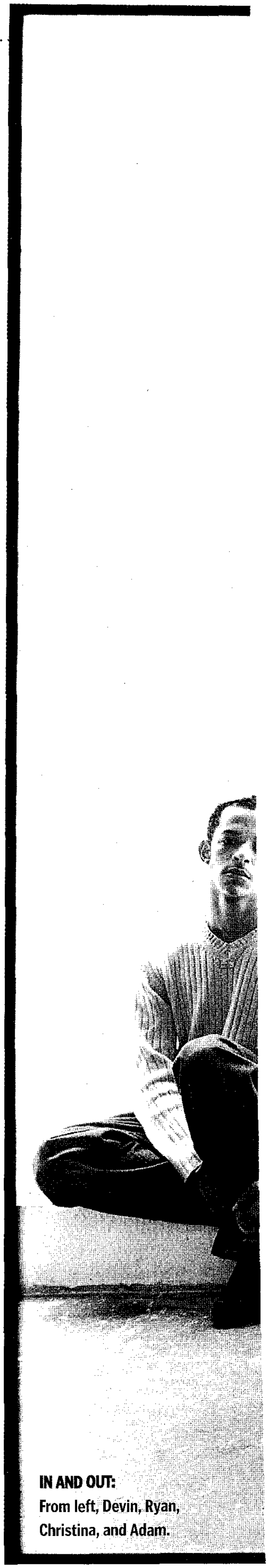
Adam, an 18-year-old junior at a private school in Manhattan, figured this out last November in his parents' Volvo station wagon, 30 minutes into a three-hour drive for a college visit to Brown. On the New England Thruway, his dad at the wheel, his mom and 4-year-old sister in the backseat, Adam seamlessly segued from a discussion of the merits of Bard College to the topic of Curt (some names have been changed), his boyfriend, who happened to be a student there. "I was really nervous," he recalls. "I was like, 'I've been seeing this guy at Bard.' And my dad didn't flinch. He was like, 'Okay.' And we started talking for a bit, but my mom hadn't heard me, and I had to say it *again*. Which was just mortifying."

His mother responded with a bit more apprehension: "She was like, 'Before I think about what my reaction is, I want you to know that I love you.' And that was really great." Even so, Adam says, he sat there suddenly regretting having said anything, especially considering that there would be two and a half more hours of awkwardness and tension before he could get out of the car in Providence. "It's hard to give up the biggest secret you have," he says. "The *only* secret you have, really."

His revelation also sort of ruined the visit to Brown: As he talked to admissions reps and toured the campus, he couldn't stop thinking, *Why did I have to tell them on this trip? What have I done?*

If Adam lamented his impulsive timing, other New York kids have shown great finesse in deciding when and how to tell their parents they're gay. D.J., a 17-year-old senior at a Manhattan high school, came out to her father, who lived in Guyana at the time, on the phone. But she waited for her mom to be laid up in bed in their Flatbush apartment. "She wasn't feeling too well, and I was like, this is the perfect time to tell her," she remembers of the day two years ago. D.J. likes to write poetry, and she went in and sat with her mother and pretended to be doing that when she was, in fact, crafting her coming-out letter. "I put a lot of positive things in it, like 'At least I'm not like my older sister—I'm not pregnant and stuck in the house. I'm still in school. I still have goals. I'm doing good for myself.' " After several minutes, she handed her mom the letter and watched her read it. "I was so scared, I wanted to cry," she says. "And she was like, 'You are so lucky my back and legs hurt, because if they didn't, you would get it.' She wanted to just scream on me."

Joshua, a 17-year-old Bronx public-high-school senior, also opted to put it on paper, and he padded the truth a bit—"Yes, I'm gay but I'm bisexual," he wrote on his 16th birthday, hoping the bisexual angle would mitigate the shock. Then he went into his mother's bedroom, shoved the page of notebook paper at her, and ran back to the kitchen and sat down with his 17-year-old foster sister, whom he'd already told, waiting for the fallout and "hoping it wasn't bad," he says. When she called out his name many long minutes later, "I



IN AND OUT: From left, Devin, Ryan, Christina, and Adam.

CPI. GROOMING BY KATRINA BORGSTROM/SUSAN PRICE.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY NIGEL PARRY

"Sometimes the West Village is no different from Brooklyn or the Bronx or anywhere else in America. A teenager can grow up a stone's throw from Stonewall and still feel intimidated about coming out."

GAY FAVES

Twenty-five queer—and queer-friendly—icons rave about their Queer New York favorites.

MELISSA ETHERIDGE, rock goddess

» Henrietta's bar: My friend Alan Cumming and the guys always want to go to girls bars, and I have to say, "You don't understand. I'm Elvis in a girls bar." But once we went to Henrietta's and there was a band covering my songs, so I got up and sang. I remember some guy complaining loudly about the cover charge. He was like, "Five dollars! Who's playing?" Then he shut up when he saw it was me.

BOB MOULD, punk-rock legend, whose new record is *Modulate*

» Rawhide. In the age of the pleather bar, it's nice that there's still a place like Rawhide. Once a guy was go-go dancing on the bar and he took a call on his cell phone! I loved that. Plus, they have Ms. Pac-Man.

LEA DELARIA, Broadway sensation

» The way gay people in New York eschew the constant need to be *gay.* Difficult carrying that rainbow flag when you're just trying to make rent. Gaystraightbiblackwhitebrownwhatever. We all party together. Bonus points for me, as I adore cheap sex with straight chicks.

MURRAY MOSS, owner of Moss, SoHo

» The anti-folk duo

"My friends on the Upper East Side would have a really, really hard time coming out to their families," Adam says. "With my family, like, half my dad's office is gay."

was like, 'Come with me, come with me,' to my sister. I was so scared, I didn't want to go by myself. My worst fear was that she might scream at me or wouldn't talk to me." Instead, she told him, "Don't worry about it. I knew. I've always known, and I was waiting for you to come out to me."

Devin, an 18-year-old senior at an all-boys parochial school in the Bronx, also chose to ease his grandmother into things by telling her he was bisexual when he was 16 (his mother is dead). "I find that a lot of people use bisexuality as a stepping stone when confronting parents," he says. "And she was okay with it. Six months later, I told her that I was actually gay, and she was supportive." He still hasn't told his father, however, since he works out of town most of the time, and "he has a problem with me wearing *earrings*, so you can imagine if I came out to him."

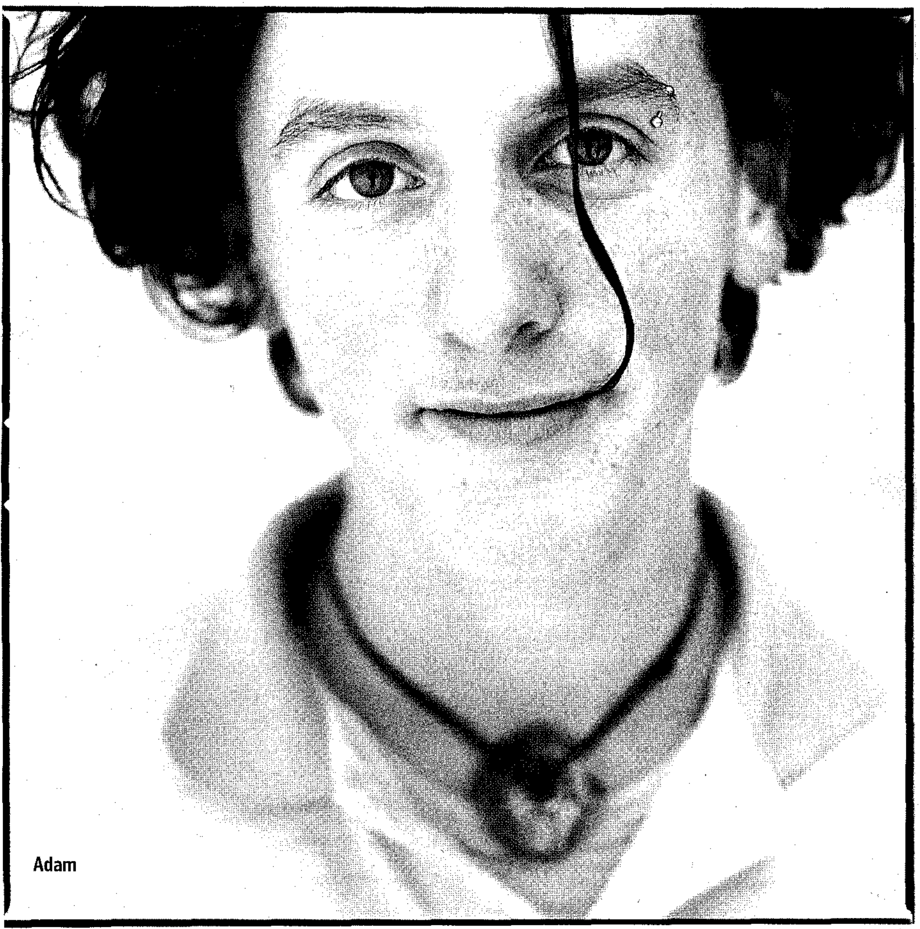
Christina, a 19-year-old senior at a public school in Manhattan, has never come out to her dad, either. (Her mother is dead.) "I've kind of all but come out," she explains. Her Puerto Rican family is pretty traditional, and her father, she says, is "very, very homophobic." When she came out to her grandmother three years ago, she broached the subject by asking what her "Grams" thought of gay people. "I'd read a lot of stories where parents were like, 'I'm going to disown you' and all of this, and I wanted to switch it and be like, 'You accept me or I will disown *you*,' " she explains. "Grams was like, 'Well, not in my family.' And I was like, 'Okay, well, I'm a lesbian. I like women, so if you don't like me, I won't call you and I won't visit you and it will be sad.' " While her grandmother was uncomfortable at first, she has come to be, for the most part, accepting.

And when his parents caught Ross smoking, the 18-year-old private-school senior from the West Village made a shrewd, lawyerly assessment of the situation. He recognized "that I had to tell them sometime soon, and that if I came out right then, I wouldn't be in as much trouble." Sure enough, the only child, then 17, wasn't severely punished for smoking, "but it was still an awful experience. My dad cried, and my mother said, 'I think you're just confused,' and 'It's not like we can't have grandchildren, what with adoption and stuff,' " Ross says. "So that was fun for me." He adds that he was utterly unprepared for how shocked they were—"I mean, they brought me up in the *West Village*."

But sometimes the West Village is no different from Brooklyn or the Bronx or anywhere else in America. A teenager can grow up a stone's throw from Stonewall and still feel intimidated about coming out. As much as the city offers very public snapshots of gay life, they remain *just* snapshots of a parallel universe if a kid lives inside a fortress of a school or a family that may not be as gay-friendly as the city at large. Or sometimes the fortress is internal—if the kid won't give herself permission to be different, since being different, *feeling* different, is so scary for a teenager. With a disapproving family or with enough self-doubt, all the city's rainbow flags and wind socks are reduced to mere scenery, and the two men pushing the Maclaren down the street are about as real as David and Keith on *Six Feet Under*.

"I think there's a perception that New York is a better place to be out," says Eric Pliner, projects coordinator at the Youth Enrichment Services Program at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center in the West Village. "But that's not true of the whole city, not all five boroughs." For some kids, he says, it means "creating separate identities from their neighborhoods, families, and churches."

When Christina came out, her grandmother asked, " 'Is it because I told you you have to stay home and cook if you have a guy?' Because I was a real feminist when I was little, like 'I'm not going to cook! I'm not going to clean!' " she explains. "Now I'm like, 'No, I just don't like guys.' And she's like, 'There are some


Adam

PREVIOUS SPREAD: PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, PATRICK MCMULLAN; RETNA; JOHN BARRETT/GLOBE PHOTOS.

guys who cook.' And I'm like, 'It's *not* the cooking! I promise, it's not the cooking.'" Eventually, her grandmother understood, but she warned Christina, "Don't bring it here" to Washington Heights.

Ryan, an 18-year-old freshman at a college in Brooklyn who lives near Lincoln Center with his parents, emigrated from Hong Kong when he was 2. He's not out to them, though he sheepishly admits he's been careless a few times around the apartment—leaving *Men's Health* open to certain pages. He's not out to his 23-year-old brother, either, though they share a bedroom crammed with an electric piano, a television (constantly tuned to the Cartoon Network), and a computer on which Ryan estimates he spends eight hours a day: Ryan *is* out online, has a profile up at a site for gay teenagers, and about twenty gay friends on his Buddy List. This year at college, he's also out to a handful of friends, most of whom are girls. "I'm very cautious," he says. "I don't even use the G-word," meaning *gay*. Sitting at a McDonald's in midtown, he quickly surveys the nearby diners, leans into the table, and discloses his code word: *grizzly*.

Ryan keeps his secret because he doesn't trust a lot of people. Other kids, though, don't trust entire neighborhoods, and fear for their safety. Joshua, for instance, says he feels like he has to put on an act when he's in his Bronx neighborhood. "When I come to Manhattan, I'm kind of feminine," he says. "But in the Bronx, I have a serious face, I even walk a different way." He definitely wouldn't consider holding hands with someone up in his neighborhood. "*Uh-uhnnnnn*," he says emphatically. "I would be scared I'd be jumped."

Near Devin's home in the Bronx, he has been called "faggot this and faggot that" when holding hands with a date, and those instances have ignited a willfulness in him. "I will purposely hold his hand because I'm headstrong and determined. I want to reinforce that I am not afraid." (It helps that Devin, a competitive sprinter and gymnast, has studied ninjitsu since he was 4.) Even with scarier threats, like the time gangbangers lobbed beer bottles at him and his cousin (who's also gay), Devin wouldn't so much as think of contacting the police. Not only is that just not done, he says, but he rationalizes his inaction because "I think it comes with the job description, if you will, of being gay. Not being afraid because you're *always* afraid. So you get used to it."

DAVID MENSAH, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE Hetrick-Martin Institute on Astor Place—the social-services organization, general hangout den, and home to the two-room Harvey Milk alternative public high school—says, "We served 8,000 youths last year, and we think we just scratched the surface. We still get calls from schools requesting 'safety transfers' because their environment became dangerous once a student came out." In fact, about 90 percent of Harvey Milk's 50 students transferred there either because they felt unsafe in their own schools or because the atmosphere was so hostile that they were chronically truant.

Even though outer-borough kids say Manhattan in general and "the Vil" in particular are the easiest places to be out, Adam points out the considerable distance between Park Avenue and Central Park West: "My friends on the Upper East Side would have a really, really hard time coming out to their conservative families," he says. "With my family, like, half my dad's office is gay."

TEENAGEDOM ALLOWS A CERTAIN LATERAL FREEdom of identity, with elaborate costume changes built into the school-year schedule: Someone comes back from summer camp a goth chick. Following spring vacation in Florida, she's a surfer girl. She hits the clearance rack at American Eagle at just the right time, and suddenly she's a hippie-preppy hybrid. And even within those roles, some shape-shifting is required—it's as if inside those overstuffed backpacks and messenger bags, teenagers carry around their multiple selves: the school self, the neighborhood self, the friend self, the family self, the online self.

Gay teenagers have to cram yet another identity into their bags: the gay self.

In a weird way, it might stand to reason that coming out could lighten the load. A kid who identifies herself as lesbian has, perhaps, found her *people* and can get on with her life. "I went through my stages. I was a lot of things," says D.J. She now classifies herself as "femme-agress," but freshman year she was very feminine. Then she tried being a candy raver, then she was goth for a few months. "I guess that's when I was trying to find who I was. And it took being with my girlfriend"—an 18-year-old from Brooklyn whom D.J. started seeing two years ago—"to realize you don't have to be like other people. You can be your own person."

"I feel like I'm finally secure with who I am," says Adam. "I'm comfortable in my own skin and I feel confident." Coming out "was the moment when I merged two different identities of myself in front of my parents. Like I had my parent identity and my Bard-best-friends identity, and to have to merge those was just kind of scary. But I never felt like anyone stopped loving me, and I feel really privileged in that." A lot of gay kids, however, aren't as lucky. In New York, fully 35 percent of the city's homeless kids identify themselves as gay or transgendered; many of them have been kicked out of their homes.

Coming out for kids can mean coming into a phase of meta-homosexuality—self-observation from a slight distance, figuring out which impulses come from within and which ones they feel obligated to adopt so they'll fit the part. Each behavior is parsed and examined: Is this who I

Testosterone Kills. Because they describe themselves as "what Simon & Garfunkel might have been if they fucked each other and grew up on Nirvana and techno and had day jobs at Moss"—which they do.

KIMBERLY PEIRCE, director of *Boys Don't Cry*

» Meow Mix. I know Brooke, and I just think it's amazing that with all the zoning laws and everything, she's been able to keep it going. It's so hard to keep a lesbian bar open in the city.

MICHAEL MUSTO, *Village Voice* columnist

» "Beige," Tuesday nights at B Bar & Grill—still the best party at which to either meet the gay mafia or become a member.

HILARY ROSEN, president and CEO of the Recording Industry Association of America

» That old standby lesbian bar Cubby Hole, where I can see everyone from my ex-high-school coach to my interns.

» The children's department at Barneys. Given the crowd that's usually there when I visit, there might as well be a special sign: GAY PARENTS ONLY.

JOHN BARTLETT, menswear designer

» *Radical Faerie drumming* circles—yes, you can find them even in New York. Sweaty, pagan bear cubs thumping to their own beat. Body hair aplenty.

» Black leather

PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, ANDREA RENAULT/GLOBE PHOTOS; DARLA KHAZEL/GALELLA; HENRY MCGEE/GLOBE PHOTOS.

"Well, not in my family," her grandmother said when Christina asked her what she thought of gay people. "And I was like, 'Okay, well, I'm a lesbian. I like women, so if you don't like me, I won't call you and I won't visit you and it will be sad.' "

am? Is *this*? Or is *this*? Their age exacerbates the process, of course, since *everything* a 16-year-old does tends to be fraught with uncertainty. When Devin started going to Hetrick-Martin for counseling shortly after he came out, he says, he was "scared. No, I was terrified. I thought gay people wore big feather hats and boas and swung their heads and snapped and had attitude." In fact, the teenagers at Hetrick-Martin look and act a lot like, well, teenagers: preppy or pierced or club or Goth or hip-hop or Powerpuff—or a value-meal combo of all the above. Nevertheless, Devin admits that "vocabulary is just one of the things that have affected me since I've been at HMI." After a week hanging with the other gay kids, he says, he went home one day and found himself complimenting his grandmother's outfit: "I was like, '*Mamí*, you are *ovah*. Oh, my God, it's working. You are so fabulous. I love it,' " he says, balancing on the hyphen between *self* and *parody*.

Sitting in an Upper East Side coffee shop with his elbows on the table, Adam gestures while telling a story, then stops mid-sentence and stares at his hand. "It's moments like this," he says, focusing on his wrist, held ever so slightly limp, "that I'm like, 'What am I doing? What is that on my arm?' "

A student of ballet since he was 6, and of modern since freshman year, Adam says it's in the dance studio at his school where he feels "I'm becoming more and more flamboyant every day. I'm not even sure if it's because I'm finally letting myself be who I am, or whether it's because I have to fall into this stereotype. I honestly don't know the answer." One thing he's sure of, though, is that growing up, he was constantly teased and called a girl, a sissy, a flower boy for dancing, and when he was realizing he might be gay, he didn't want to admit it. He says he felt that "I didn't want them to be right about me."

Adam started thinking about his sexual orientation the summer he was 13, on a Unitarian retreat in New Hampshire. He and his longtime best friend Erika shared a fascination with another boy at the camp. But when the trip was over, "I convinced myself that that was something special about that guy and it was a summer thing and not relevant to how I define myself," he says. "I was like, 'I have girlfriends!' " This internal resistance worked until about a year ago, at which point he finally came out to himself. "I'm not sure what happened in the spring. But I just started noticing guys on the street and admitting it to myself." Then he waited six months to tell his parents during that trip to Brown. (September 11 prompted his confession, since "it reminded me of my mortality and I wanted my family to know who I was.") Another five months or so passed before Adam felt slightly comfortable saying "I am gay."

Ross says he knew he was gay in the eighth grade "or maybe earlier," but waited three years to tell his parents. D.J. came to her own realization even younger. When she was 10, she had an intense flirtation and physical relationship with a 13-year-old girl who lived in her building. "That's when I began to find out that I was more interested in girls than guys, and I got happy with it."

Christina came out to herself as a 12-year-old. "I started having feelings for girls and I was like, 'Well, maybe I'm just open-minded and bisexual. It *is* kind of the trend.' " It seems the mid-nineties girl-power movement—which freed girls to be as emotional and sensitive as they wanted to be—left Christina thinking that "girls are just generally open to things. So it's okay if two girls kiss each other," she says. It wasn't until she was 16, and on the phone with a friend talking about a girl whom she secretly had a crush on, that she realized bisexual might not be her category after all. "It was so frightening," she says, and she immediately "went out and got a boyfriend. And I stayed with him for a month and was like, *Yeeeee-ahhhh*. This isn't working out. No, this isn't it."

For Ryan, the awareness came before the vocabulary: "When I was 4—yup, 4 years old—when I first learned that word, I was like, 'Oh, that's *me*.' I just remember knowing." Devin, too, has known since kindergarten: "I've questioned myself as to whether I was gay or bisexual, but I've always had feelings for men."

"TEN YEARS AGO, COMING OUT WAS AN ADULT process," says Jim Anderson, spokesman for Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) in New York. "Now it's an adolescent process." And teenagers who have the courage (and support) to come out have an advantage over those who wait until their twenties or later. Eric Pliner of the Gay Center says that when kids "cut themselves off from their sexual identity, their ability to develop appropriately is hindered." Which can lead, Lord help them, to a *second* adolescence when they do come out, whenever that may be. (Prime-time example: *ER*'s Dr. Kerry Weaver and her cringey, *Tiger Beat* dating tactics as a freshly minted, mid-forties lesbian.)

There's been another change over the past ten years, too: the emergence of gay youth culture. Maybe the best indication is that for these kids, GSA is simply part of their automatic shorthand, like URL or ADD. It stands for Gay Straight Alliance, and there are about 60 in New York City schools, virtually all of them started within the past decade. (Joshua helped start the one at his school last year—so far, there are twelve members, four of them gay.) Generally, GSAs seem to attract progressive straight girls—almost as if they're certification programs for the junior fag hag. Christina, who proudly wears an I PREFER GIRLS pin on her school backpack, helped start her school's GSA during her sophomore year, just as she was coming out. "It's where everyone gets exposed to gay and lesbian culture, and it's really a lot of fun."

Still, since it's an extracurricular activity, these kids have to contend with that old joiner–lone wolf dilemma. Ryan says he didn't go for the gung-ho(mo) style of the GSA in his old high school. "They called it the *Raaaainnnbow* Club," he says, rolling his eyes as he arcs his voice. "They were always mentioning that club on the morning announcements. Like, 'Remember to join the Rainbow Club on Monday afternoons.' And I was like, '*Aaaggghhhh*.' " And while Adam is the president of the bowling club at his school, he says he would never join the GSA. "I owe a lot to them, and I'm glad they're there," he says, "but there was a kid in it a few years back, and he graduated years ago, and he's still referred to as the Gay Kid. I don't want to be remembered like that."

Christina

GSA members or not, these kids say they feel supported, in varying degrees, by their friends and schoolmates. Joshua came out at school in the spring of his junior year—his writing class hosted a poetry café where they read their poems and served doughnuts and coffee. "At the time, my mom was getting used to my being gay, and it was not an easy process, so I spoke with anger. I was like, 'I'm gay, and if you don't like it, too bad.' " The crowd of 50 students and teachers gave him a standing ovation.

The few friends whom Ryan has told have been supportive. "Shocked," he stresses, "but supportive. Usually, their first response is 'Prove it!' And I don't know how to prove it." (A few of his female friends have crushes on him, and one girl in particular recently asked him if he was "100 bazillion percent sure I'm grizzly.") At Devin's all-boys school, he's well liked not only because he's a top student, an athlete, and a clotheshorse but also because he's friends with a lot of girls outside of school. Thus, straight boys see him as a link to cute girls.

Possibly thanks in part to Howard Stern's tireless crusading on their behalf, lesbians win the popularity contest. And this appears to be true even—or especially—in high schools. Christina says that if you're a lesbian—and "you're not a man hater"—then you're "an awesome, cool, tough, or totally femme girl and you strut your stuff and have sexual power." And with that comes respect from other kids. Although when she first came out, a few boys in school asked her, " 'Can I watch?' And I was like, 'You watch too much HBO.' "

Teenage boys in Flatbush, D.J. says, are homophobic toward gay boys, "but for females, they're more accepting—because then they're like, 'I want to do you *and* your girlfriend,' " she says. "I told one guy that I'm gay, and he was upset, but then his mind changed and he was like, 'You know, me, you, and your girlfriend could get down.' "

Gay teenage guys, at least, have their own magazine—another manifestation of heretofore nonexistent gay youth culture. San Francisco–based *XY* magazine, a slick glossy launched in 1996, has a readership of 200,000 (it's available at Tower Records and Barnes & Noble in the city, and at selected stores in those chains nationwide). *XY* prints pictures of gay teens and young adults holding hands and kissing (and prints their poetry and essays, too).

And five years ago, here in New York, Jeff Brenner started the weekly Friday-night 18-plus party "Kurfew," a co-ed event that draws between 500 and 1,000 young gays and lesbians and their straight friends to Twirl, a vast, lounge-style club on West 23rd Street. Brenner, who was then 25 and had just been fired from an accounting firm 48 hours after coming out at work, recognized that "there was nothing for an 18-year-old gay kid to do." So he started promoting a party where, for $5 to $20 per person, there's "no pressure. They can sit, they can dance, they can be exposed to the community and avoid a predatory environment."

jeans from the Leather Man, my personal favorite New York designer. Discover the new meaning of an inseam fitting as you get them hand-tailored to order.

GEORGE WAYNE, resident goddess at *Vanity Fair*

» Moby's not gay, but it's hard to imagine gay music—or the city's music scene in general—without him. To me, Moby epitomizes the Gotham post-millennial downtown sensibility—he is not only one of the most influential arbiters of pop culture but also one of the realest, coolest, sweetest downtown denizens. If Warhol were still with us, he would have been cozying up to Moby as his new best friend.

TOM FONTANA, creator of HBO's *Oz*

» My gay friends David and Brian—because their marriage has lasted longer than mine did.

LARRY TEE, promoter

» Electroclash—perhaps the largest musical movement in gay history.

» Drag king Murray Hill. Her party with Le Tigre and a hundred drag kings was the most exciting event I went to last year. These dykes party hard!

» Brooklyn gays—they dress better in Brooklyn.

SIR IAN MCKELLEN, the gay knight

» Being in New York can be like being in a bewildering Woody Allen movie, but I love it for Joe's Pub, where the liveliest

PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, ROSE HARTMAN/GLOBE PHOTOS; GINA JAMES/RETNA; ANDREA RENAULT/GLOBE PHOTOS.

"I want to reinforce that I am not afraid," says Devin. "I think it comes with the job description of being gay. Not being afraid because you're *always* afraid. So you get used to it."

In New York, gay kids, like all teenagers, recognize they have a certain strange sway over adults—they realize the culture at large (television, movies, advertising) objectifies youthful sexuality. But unlike a gay kid who lives in Lebanon, New Hampshire, a gay youth here can flaunt that power to a ready, receptive, and sometimes all-too-appreciative audience. (One meet-and-chat Website for gay teenagers features several self-posted professional-quality photos of lovely young men in the metropolitan area who are essentially advertising their availability to older men. "If you have a house in East Hampton, I LOVE YOU!" one aspiring houseboy writes.)

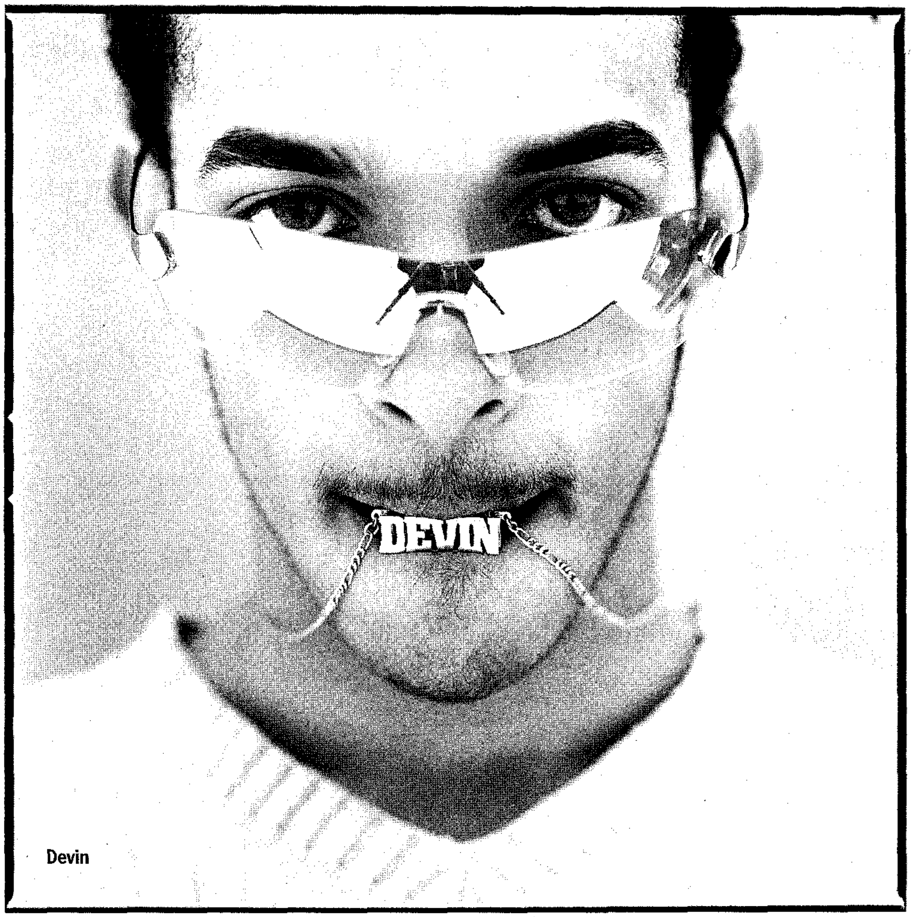
With this in mind, the Hetrick-Martin staff tends to be fiercely protective, and their actions on behalf of the kids fall somewhere between fairy-godmotherly and meddlesome. During the Gay Pride Parade, for instance, the school always has a big, colorful float surrounded by jubilant kids. Understandably, they get wild applause from viewers along the route, as well as from fellow marchers. But if one of those marchers decides to elbow his way into the scrum of teenagers, and happens to be wearing, say, a bottle's worth of Glitter Girl body gel, white-feather angel wings, a silver thong, and not a stitch otherwise, a staff member will ask him to move along—it's just not the image they're trying to convey. HMI staff members also send task forces to Christopher Street, beseeching bar owners to be vigilant about checking IDs.

Adam, who only needs to shave part of his upper lip, and even that just once a month, recognizes and ruminates over his youthful power. At some cafés, he says, he can occasionally get himself a free coffee from gay waiters. "It's only because I'm young. I'm not flattered by it anymore. In a few years, I will no longer be a commodity, and I know that," he says. "I definitely feel like I'm being manipulative in a certain way." This small-beans manipulation could be seen, though, as payback for the unwanted attention he gets from the occasional older man who winks at him at 7:30 in the morning on the crosstown bus when he's on his way to school.

As recently as ten years ago, a gay kid's only entree to gay adulthood might have been to sneak into a gay bar and get hit on by an older person and learn the secret code of homosexuality—the grown-ups' code. Now, though, as gay teenagers are more and more visible, they're establishing their own code. All the external, cultural changes are making the internal, personal process less terrifying. It's easier for gay kids to give themselves permission to be who they are. The importance of being out while doing normal teenage things like hanging around or talking or going to the prom or sitting around the cube at Astor Place cannot be discounted, because, as Devin says, "I'm human before I'm anything. I'm Devin before I'm gay."

GLSEN's Anderson says the progress is tangible: "I think the difference in the adults these kids will become cannot be underestimated. We're beginning to see a generation of young people who aren't forced to hide in the closet, or to be true and honest about only part of themselves."

And yet—despite their courage, despite the pockets of approval they've found, despite the city and its resources and very visible gay community, despite *Queer As Folk* and *Will & Grace* and two sevenths of this season's *Real World* cast—these kids still have an overarching sense that there's much work to be done. "You can't be open everywhere. You have to analyze and observe before you act," says Joshua, who plans to study political science at Sarah Lawrence next year. His hopes for life beyond college are endearingly and awesomely ambitious: "I would like to be the Martin Luther King of gay rights." If Joshua has his way, in his lifetime—and in those of D.J. and Adam and Ryan and Devin and Ross and Christina—"people will accept it. You can be any way you want and not have to worry about being beaten up. We'll get them in the courts and in city hall and in the streets. That's *my* dream." ■



Devin

CRYSTAL BALL

The party drug crystal meth is fueling a new epidemic of unsafe sex—and, Ethan Brown reports, some experts fear the party's only just begun.

LATE ON A QUIET FRIDAY NIGHT IN THE FLATIRON district, a handful of men in cutoff jeans and sleeveless T-shirts cluster outside an office building on 25th Street, smoking cigarettes and exchanging numbers. "Are you a member or a guest?" asks a man bearing a clipboard. "We're here to see Rick," offers my companion. "Rick's not here right now," the doorman says. "He just left for the L.U.R.E."

Minutes later, at the cavelike S&M club the L.U.R.E., Rick is nowhere in sight. Rick (not his real name) sells crystal methamphetamine, also known as "Tina" or "party favors." And unlike dealers of other drugs—who live by the credo "don't get high on your own supply"—crystal dealers tend to use heavily, so they're often as speedy as what they sell. To update the famous Lou Reed lyric, you do not wait for the man, you actively chase him.

Back on West 25th Street, the sun is starting to rise. "He's still not here, but you can go upstairs if you'd like," says the doorman. "Take the elevator to 6E." The elevator rumbles to a stop at the sixth floor, opening into a loftlike television studio. Dance music pounds and gay porn plays on TVs hung from the ceiling. In the reception area, a bored-looking Latino guy—who's checking not just coats but clothes—takes tips from a line of men waiting to get in. Muscled, naked men pace around, towels slung over their shoulders, while others masturbate quietly, their eyes transfixed by the video screens.

An attractive African-American man approaches. "You guys need Tina?" he asks. "Sixty dollars for a quarter"—a quarter gram. I hand over three $20 bills; he fumbles through his knapsack for a bag of crystal, which looks like shards of broken glass. He introduces himself—we'll call him Peter—and asks a stream of rambling questions. "Where are you from?" "What were you doing before you came here?" "How long have you been partying?" Before I can answer, Peter says anxiously: "I gotta go."

But Peter doesn't go anywhere; he simply moves to a different couch, stationing himself beside a naked man with a barbed-wire tattoo around his forearm. He whispers something in the man's ear, then quickly produces another bag of crystal. Just after 6:30, Peter kisses a man dressed in leather gear and heads for the elevator. "When can I see you again?" I ask. "Here's my number," he says. "But if you can't reach me, Rick and I are always here."

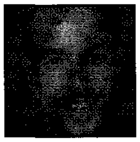
NAME A DRUG—ANY DRUG—AND A SOCIAL SCENE springs to mind. Marijuana is smoked by hip-hoppers and hippies, ecstasy consumed by wide-pupiled clubbers, cocaine snorted by socialites and social climbers. But rarely has a drug been so intertwined with one subculture as crystal meth is with New York's underground gay-sex scene, which has been flourishing of late, particularly post-Giuliani. "Ecstasy might give users an ecstatic feeling, which is perfect for dance clubs," says Robert Klitzman, an assistant professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University, who has studied the drug habits of gay men. "Crystal, on the other hand, can make users ravenously horny. There's even a phrase for it in the gay community: 'crystal dick.' "

Crystal—a stimulant that produces reactions ranging from hyperactivity to euphoria—has become an epidemic among gays in New York. "Four years ago, 10 percent of our clients had a problem with it," says Paul McCabe, program director of the Pride Institute, which provides substance-abuse and mental-health treatment to the gay and lesbian community. "Now we're up to 40 to 50 percent. And it's 70 percent for our clients under 30." Marc Berkley, party promoter and head of gay weekly *HX*, says it never used to be that way: "A few years ago, you wouldn't see crystal. We had a joke about it: 'The queens in L.A.

acts (Lea DeLaria et al.) give out to a discerning crowd—and you can smoke there.

SCOTT HEIM, author of *Mysterious Skin* and the upcoming *We Disappear*
» Other Music. The best CD-record shop in NYC, and the score of mopey nerd boys are always an added attraction.
» Saints. A hideaway bar at 109th and Amsterdam—a nice long distance from Chelsea.

KATE CLINTON, comedian
» The New York Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center Garden Party—and not just for the name. It kicks off Gay Pride Week, and it's filled with power dykes, overpectoralized Cornish gay men, and gay politicos. This year, I'm emceeing and wearing donated Marc Jacobs.

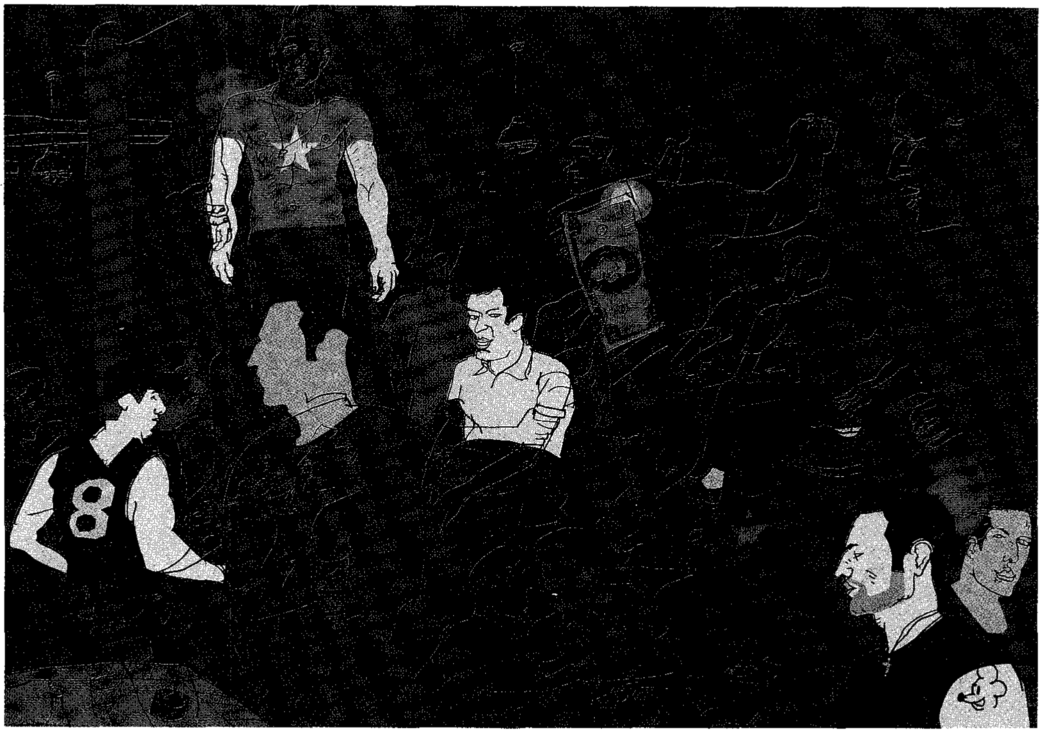


ANTHONY ROMERO, ACLU executive director
» Out of Our Closet, a consignment shop in Chelsea. Where else can the director of a nonprofit get a Versace suit for $200?

MURRAY HILL, king of drag kings
» The way no matter what chichi gay hangout I stumble into, people never fail to greet me with a "Hiya doin', Murray. Let me get you a Rheingold."

JILL SOBULE, singer-songwriter
» People-watching on my block in Williamsburg: gay, artist, or rock musician?

PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, DARLA KHAZI/GALELLA; COURTESY ACLU; JON ERKIDER/RETNA.



"It was like *Lady Sings the Blues*!" says David Sedaris, a former crystal user. "I remember thinking, *Oh my God, I am a drug addict*. I thought I was an artist, but I really was a drug addict."

do crystal because they're three hours behind and want to catch up with New York.' "

"What we're hearing about crystal meth is alarming," says Bridget Brennan, special narcotics prosecutor for the city of New York, who took down one of the city's first sophisticated, highly profitable crystal-meth rings last summer. "Plus, the crystal meth we're seeing is not diluted. With coke, it's broken down by suppliers. With crystal, how they buy it is how they sell it." And though the drug is still expensive in New York, its remarkably long duration (one "bump," or sniff, can keep users wired for hours) makes it an economical alternative to coke, which requires line after line to keep you high.

That crystal—a drug long associated with the West Coast, where it's used by everyone from ravers to truck drivers—has taken root in New York among gay men is no accident, says Klitzman. "The dealers know the demand is small right now, so they're focusing on the gay scene, which has always been one step ahead in terms of narcotics trends. It's really only a matter of time before we have a wider crystal epidemic."

ON A RECENT TUESDAY NIGHT, ABOUT 40 MEN SIT ON folding chairs in a room in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center on West 13th Street. They're here for a Crystal Meth Anonymous meeting, one of three CMA gatherings that now take place at the center every week. The meeting, which is so crowded that it spills into the hallway, immediately dispels the notion that all gay crystal addicts are club-hoppers: There are muscled Chelsea boys, but also grandfatherly men in their sixties; lithe, dreadlocked black men; and even nine-to-fivers toting briefcases.

John is one of the group's original members. He, too, evades type: With his gym-toned arms, intense blue eyes, and neatly trimmed, slightly graying hair, John looks like a healthy, hip middle-aged man. And his past is hardly typical of a heavy drug abuser either. While his Catholic-high-school classmates in suburban Virginia smoked pot and drank heavily, John stayed clean—"I was a total drugs virgin."

But after moving to New York in the early eighties, John came out of the closet and became friends with a group of men who fanatically frequented the downtown nightclub the Saint. One night in 1982, underneath the strobe lights, someone handed him an ecstasy pill. "That night completely changed my life," John says. "It was the first time I was able to feel a bond with a large group of people." Soon, he was partying with the best of them, taking MDA (a chemical cousin of ecstasy) and ketamine (an animal tranquilizer). After the Saint shuttered in 1988, though, he felt burned out, tired of all the drugs but also searching for a better one.

Then, in the mid-nineties, "a friend asked, 'Have you tried smoking crystal?' " After his first hit, John knew he had found his new drug. "I thought, *This is fabulous. I want to do this all the time*. There was a subtle, warm euphoria, a strong feeling of eros. I knew that I would have to work very hard to *not* become a drug degenerate." He laughs. "That didn't last very long."

John kept his crystal use in check for a few months, but after his boyfriend moved out in 1997, he became unhinged. "During the summer of '97," he recalls, "I smoked crystal—and had sex—on every square inch of Fire Island." One particularly memorable bender lasted from Gay Pride Weekend, in late June, to July 4. "I basically went ten days without sleep."

John confessed his problem to his therapist, who suggested that he go to an AA meeting. But he noticed that there were crucial differences between the addictions. "Alcoholics are often introverted types," John says. "But with crystal, you're out all the time, you never miss a day of work. You're like Superman." (Also, as he points out, "most alcoholics wouldn't know what it's like to masturbate for three days straight.") In July of 1999, a local CMA chapter was started. "I'll never forget the first meeting," he says with a laugh.

ILLUSTRATION BY OLIVIER KUGLER

"It was just me, a transsexual, and another guy." It's a growing fraternity: Now there are more CMA groups at the Gay Men's Health Crisis than any other twelve-step program.

Crystal is having a devastating effect on gay men not only in New York but in other big cities. "Look at the syphilis rates in Seattle," Klitzman says. "They've skyrocketed along with crystal's popularity. People's judgment is decreased on this drug, which leads to wildly unsafe sex, which can in turn drastically increase the risk of HIV infection."

"We're seeing a strong correlation between crystal and HIV infection," agrees McCabe of the Pride Institute in New York. "People who have weathered years of staying safe are getting into crystal and then testing positive."

The crystal-sex connection becomes clear at the CMA meeting, when the moderator warns the group not to be too explicit in relating stories of "crystal-triggered" sex; such tales could easily cause a relapse. Moments later, one man cuts short a story about a threesome. And if recovery from most drugs is measured in days and months, time away from crystal seems to be clocked in minutes and hours. A handsome, well-dressed guy begins by mentioning that he's not a New Yorker at all; he's here on business. He'd promised himself that he wouldn't use while here, but gave in over the weekend. Another admits that just this morning, on his way to work, he ran into an ex-drug buddy and before he knew it, he blurted to his friend: "I wanna get high."

"We're seeing a strong correlation between crystal and HIV infection," says Paul McCabe of the Pride Institute. "People who have weathered years of staying safe are getting into crystal and then testing positive."

"I HAVE TO NEVER, EVER RUN OUT OF THIS." THOSE were best-selling author David Sedaris's thoughts when he took his first bump of crystal way back in 1980. To Sedaris, who was working as a waiter in North Carolina, the drug's appeal was simple. "With ecstasy and cocaine, you're always chasing that first high," Sedaris explains. "But with crystal, you find it every time."

Sedaris quickly became friends with his dealer's customers—they even formed a crystal collective of sorts. "We used the word *manifesto* a lot," Sedaris says, "and we were into creating these bizarre abstract art projects." Typically, Sedaris offers a counterintuitive take on crystal as aphrodisiac: "I've heard about guys staying up for two days and having sex, but that would never happen with me. I'd be trying to hustle the guy out the door so I could paint envelopes."

But the drug soon consumed Sedaris. "I once told a friend that I left my keys on her kitchen table, just so I could get in there and steal her drugs," he admits. And colored envelopes aside, it took a heavy toll on his creative life. "I look at the stuff I wrote then and it's just complete trash. Nothing would have happened during the course of the day, but somehow everything meant *something*."

His withdrawal was also unexpectedly painful: "I couldn't get out of bed, and when I wasn't in bed, I was curled up in a ball on the floor crying. It was like *Lady Sings the Blues*! I remember thinking, *Oh my God, I am a drug addict.* I thought I was an artist, but I really was a drug addict."

Still, Sedaris says that crystal's lure remains potent. "There are times when I think, *God, if I had some crystal right now, I could get so much done,*" he says. "And if there was a drug that combined coffee and crystal, I'd be finished!" Sedaris pauses. "But all I have to do is look at my writing back then," he says. "And I'll think: *Nah.*"

PRECISELY WHY CRYSTAL—WHOSE SIDE EFFECTS range from heart attacks to psychosis—is so tough to kick is a question that stymies public-health officials, even though it is chemically similar to prescribed drugs such as Desoxyn and Ritalin. "What we do know, however, is that the drug is highly addictive," says Klitzman. "The brain develops a desperate need for this substance, which makes the road to recovery long, very painful, and filled with relapses."

Recovering addict J.L. is in the midst of that struggle: After a disastrous three-year affair with crystal that included a bitter split from his partner and testing positive for HIV, he fled New York for a rehab clinic in Minnesota. An actor and voice coach, J.L. says that being away from the city he loves has been tough—his first relapse came when he read a story in the New York *Times* about a play his ex-boyfriend had worked on coming to Broadway. "That blew my mind," J.L. says. "He was going to Broadway, and I was in rehab. I immediately went out and used."

J.L. is clean now, but worries that gay life provides daunting challenges to sobriety. "How do I stay sober and meet gay men? How do I exist as a social gay man and not come into contact with drugs?" He laughs. "And this is Minneapolis!"

Like many of his fellow New Yorkers who've moved to midwestern rehab centers, J.L. sees little but danger in returning to the city. "Some of the guys say they'll never come back to New York, and I'm not sure I can either," J.L. says. "You have to understand: Once you're in the loop in New York, there's a place to go and party every night." He pauses for a moment. "Nothing can compare to crystal, it just keeps you up there," he says in a voice that sounds both awestruck and sad. "Life only gives you that in moments." ■

» Toys in Babeland—a great place to see or buy a Hello Kitty vibrator.

BRIAN KEITH JACKSON, whose new book is *The Queen of Harlem*

» The Harlem Fairway: an excellent place to get your uptown flirt on. No matter what anyone tells you, freshness counts.

MARGARITA LOPEZ, councilwoman

» Ray's Newsstand on Avenue A between East 7th Street and St. Marks, for their chocolate malteds. Every time I come home from work late, I have to pick one up for my partner.

JANE PRATT, editor of *Jane*

» My favorite intersection in the city—Bleecker Street at West 11th. Where, especially on a weekend afternoon, the cutest guys shop at Marc Jacobs and eat cupcakes at Magnolia Bakery.

JACKIE COLLINS, whose latest book, *Deadly Embrace,* is out in June

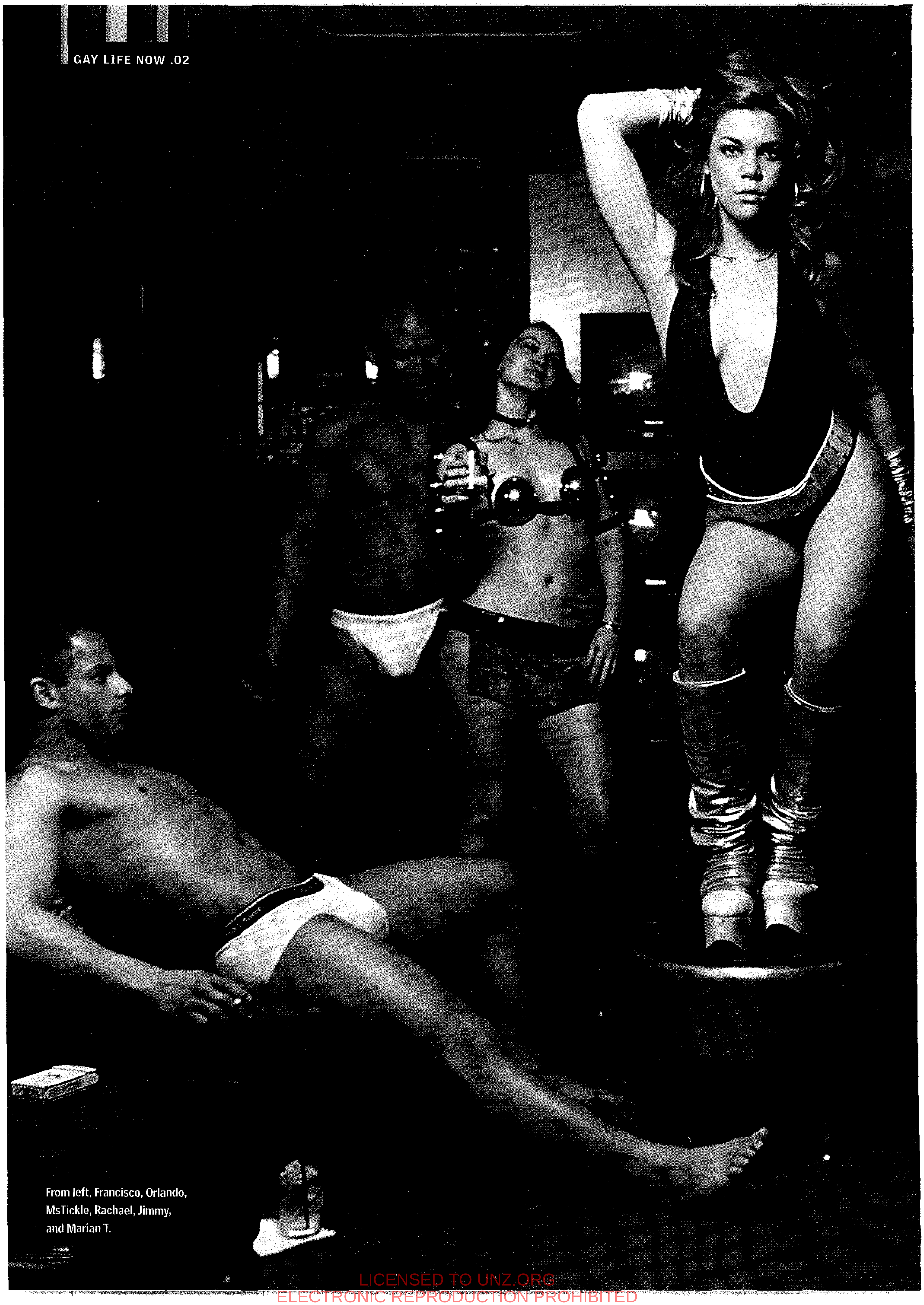
» Going to a bar with gay friends to watch *Queer as Folk,* and everyone fighting over Brian!

» Michael Musto. Nobody bitches as well as Michael!

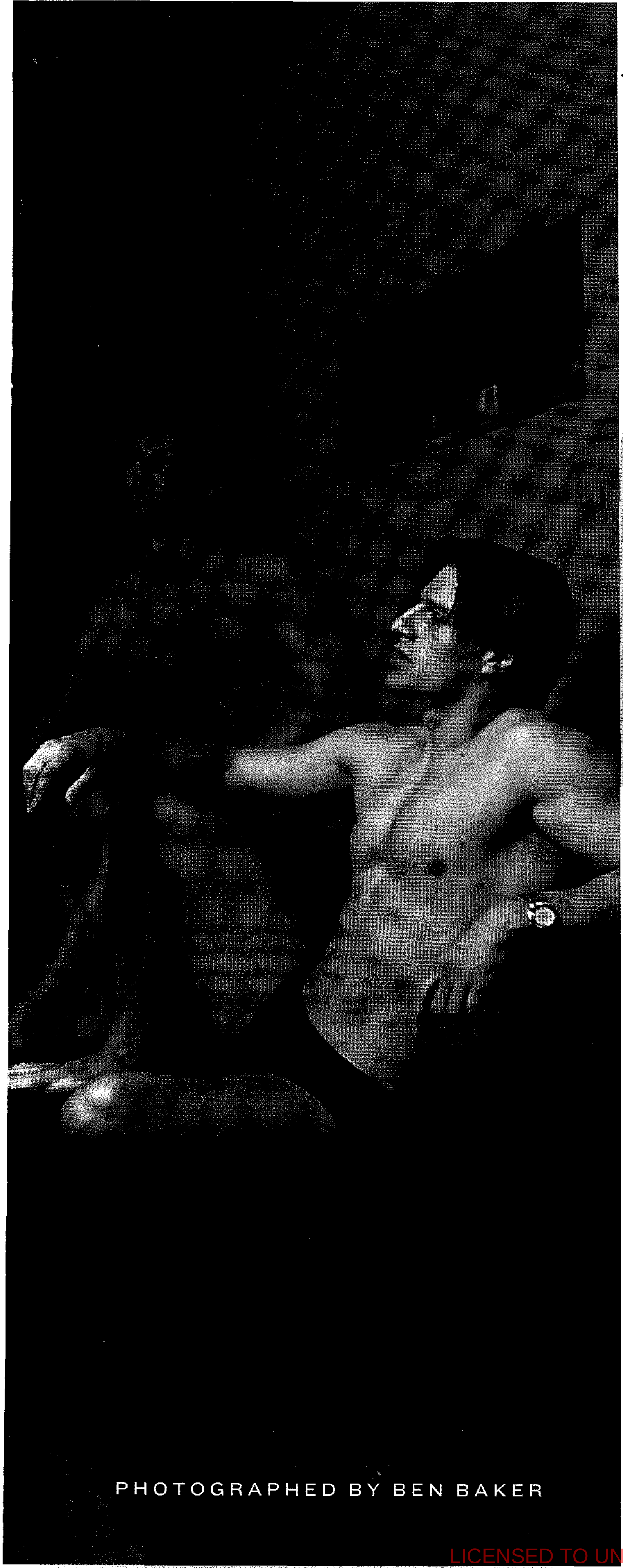
FRANK DECARO, "Out at the Movies" critic for *The Daily Show With Jon Stewart*

» The Old Chelsea Post Office: Because my postman has Divine tattooed on his leg. Because you never know who you might meet while you're waiting to Express Mail. Because if

PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, COURTESY BRIAN KEITH JACKSON; HENRY MCGEE/GLOBE PHOTOS; LISA ROSE/GLOBE PHOTOS.



From left, Francisco, Orlando, MsTickle, Rachael, Jimmy, and Marian T.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY BEN BAKER

GROOMING BY ROB TALTY/LUXE.

YOU GO-GO, GIRLS!

... and boys. Derek de Koff gets go-go dancers to (really) reveal themselves.

FRANCISCO, 26, Roxy and SBNY
"I started in the business because you get good money for such a small amount of work. I'm as straight as they come, honey. Gays love straight guys—that's the only reason I have a job. I love the gay clubs, man. The freedom, the politeness—there's too much jealousy in straight clubs."

ORLANDO, 29, the Roxy and SBNY
"One time, I was dancing and I went up to this big, burly couple wearing jackets and baseball caps—I was really hot, doing my sexy stuff, and I kept wondering, *Why are they looking at me that way? They're so serious . . . so angry.* Then I realized they were two lesbians."

MSTICKLE, 27, Meow Mix, "Bombshell" at Suite 16, and others
"If a customer is rude, you smile and tell them to back off. If that doesn't work, a spike heel in the neck goes a long way. . . . Once, my friend and I were dancing on a bar top in London and trying to be all sexy. We both slipped and fell in Boy George's lap."

RACHAEL (a.k.a. Darling Star), 22, "Bombshell" at Suite 16, "Gloss" at Meow Mix
"Once, after several bourbons, I thought it would be a good idea to do backflips off my go-go cage. When I almost landed on my head, I realized, *I have no insurance.* If I hurt myself, I'm a broke ass. You can't really call your mom and say, 'Hey, Ma, I just broke my head open from backflipping off my go-go cage . . .' "

JIMMY, 26, the Roxy and "Hunk-O-Mania," "a male revue for females only," at Float
"As a straight guy, the only downside to working at a gay party is how picky some of the guys are. I hate it when they roll their eyes at me as if to say, 'You're not all that . . .' "

MARIAN T, 26, SBNY, Stonewall, and others
"For any go-go boys just starting out: Don't expect to do this for too long."

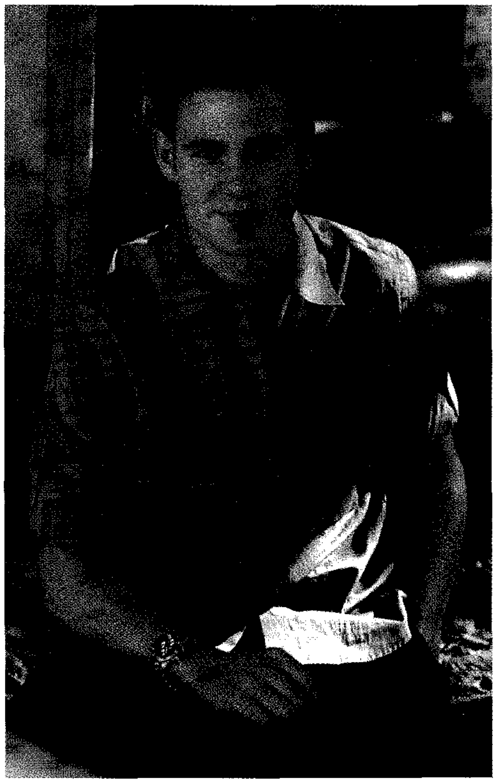
LOVE AND WAR

MTV icon Danny Roberts on life as a military spouse—and why his ex-Army-captain boyfriend has no desire to fight "Don't ask, don't tell."

What people never think of is that the civilian half of the relationship—in our case, *me*—has to keep the relationship in the closet, too. Which was so surreal, because I was already out to millions of TV viewers.

IN FEBRUARY, MY BOYFRIEND, PAUL, LEFT THE MILITARY. Millions of TV viewers think they know Paul because he occasionally visited me in New Orleans when I was on *The Real World*. Even though Paul's face was always electronically blurred on the show, people came to a lot of conclusions about him. Most assumed he was some typical young recruit in the Navy, that his job was just a job—and that he could go out and get another job if the military's "Don't ask, don't tell" policy got too tricky to deal with.

The truth is, he was a captain in the U.S. Army, the military was his *life*, and it had been for twelve years. I met Paul two weeks before *The Real World*, we fell in love, and we've been together ever since. Right after *The Real World* wrapped in early 2000, Paul got stationed in Wilmington, North Carolina, and I moved there with him. For the next year and a half, I felt like a prisoner in our apartment. We couldn't risk being seen together, not only because of my recognizability but because of Paul's rank. If you're caught lying about your sexual orientation, you can get in so much trouble. He could even have faced jail.



What people never think of when it comes to "Don't ask, don't tell" is that if a boyfriend or a girlfriend is involved, that rule ends up applying to him or her, too. The civilian half of the relationship—in our case, *me*—has to keep the relationship in the closet, too. Which was so surreal, because I was out to literally millions of TV viewers.

In Wilmington, I felt like I was in Nazi Germany, having to hide my papers. Paul and I would never go to the movies on the weekends—only weekday matinees when hardly anybody was there. There were certain hours we knew not to go to the grocery store. We could never go to dance clubs—somebody might see us.

What Paul and I went through was what other gay couples go through every day when one half of the couple is in the military. You both live in fear of somebody finding out. "Don't ask, don't tell" turns into "Don't ask, don't tell, don't live."

What kept me sane was that we traveled a lot; we took little vacations. And I'd already started a post-*Real World* career as a public speaker, touring colleges to promote tolerance, so I'd get away from Wilmington when I did that, too.

Last summer, Paul started doing the paperwork to get out of the military (when you have rank, it's kind of up to the military to decide when you're allowed to leave). Then September 11 happened, he was put on hold, and he almost got sent to Afghanistan. He definitely would have gone if the Army had sent him—he was proud to serve his country. I know for a fact that he'd still be in the military were it not for our relationship.

By December, all the papers were processed. By February, he was completely out of the Army. There's nothing they can do to him now.

We ended up moving to Seattle—to make a major change and get away from the South. I make a good living on the lecture circuit, but Paul, whose position was "I'm going to leave the military and see what happens," landed in the job market in the middle of a recession. He was an Army captain who had been planning to spend his entire life in the military and go up through the ranks. And now, with our nation at war, when the Army is short of officers, he's managing a retail store. It's been a huge ego blow for him.

PAUL HAD TO LEAVE THE MILITARY BECAUSE HE'S gay, but now that he's done with it, he doesn't want to be the poster child for the acceptance of gays in the military. He has no intention of becoming a public figure—he doesn't want all the

PHOTOGRAPH BY JIMMY MALECKI.

bullshit that he sees me having to deal with.

Paul's position is that it's ridiculous for anybody to expect the military to accept gays overnight. That will not happen until our society *in general* accepts gays, because our military is just a reflection of our society and our society's values. There are a lot of people in the armed forces who still think it's perfectly okay to *kill* somebody because they don't believe in the way he lives his life. It happened with Barry Winchell, and it'll happen again.

Some people argue, "Well, the military has to be progressive. *Make* people accept it." But that's not the military's job. The military's role is not to advance social issues. That's Hollywood's job!

And, to my surprise, it's become *my* job, too.

Basically, I did *The Real World* as an escape from a shitty job. I was an office bitch at an insurance company in Atlanta. Call me naïve, but I never imagined that anything *real* would come out of *The Real World*, because it is what it is—a cheesy little reality-TV show.

But now, because of the show, I've gone from filing and answering phones to being part of this great change in society, you know?

What's happened to me since I first appeared on MTV has often been overwhelming. I never *wanted* to be a gay activist. But what I realize over and over again when I tour the country and when I read my e-mail and message boards (I run a gay-community site called CountrytoConcrete.com) is that there are still a lot of gays out there who are lost and afraid. I don't want to sound too over-the-top about this, but my heart is full of love and courage, and I want to share it with the world. So that's what I'm doing. ■

CHEAT SHEET: QUEER CULTURE A TO Z

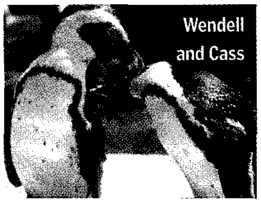
BONUS FEATURE: No mention of Barbra Streisand—*or* Andrew Sullivan!

A is for Aneesa, the unbelievably hot (and hilarious) lesbian from this season's *The Real World*.

B is for Mike Bloomberg, our gay-friendly mayor.

C is for the newly renamed "Chances Are . . . " on Christopher Street, the gay bar with the creepiest name *of all time* (the ominous ellipses make for endless possibilities: " . . . You're Hideous," " . . . Crabs," etc.).

D is for *Details*—not a gay magazine, but we still like to look at the pictures.


Wendell and Cass

E is for Enrique Iglesias, Ricky Martin minus the sexual ambiguity (he's dating Anna Kournikova). You can run, you can hide, but you can't escape his mole.

F is for "Freek," the George Michael single about sex addiction, featuring dial-up-modem squeals (can't he afford broadband?) to connote cybersex (can't he afford a real boyfriend?).

G is for straight *Alias* star Jennifer Garner, the hottest leather-clad lesbian icon since Lucy "Xena" Lawless.

H is for Homer, which is what renegesbian Anne Heche (Ellen's ex) has named her son. *D'ohh!*

I is for Sir Ian McKellen—how cool is it that Gandalf the Gray (in *The Lord of the Rings)* was played by an openly gay actor?

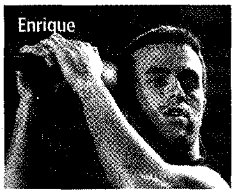
Travis

J is for gay-lit "It" boy JT LeRoy—whose genius novel *Sarah* is beloved by Courtney Love.

K is for pop goddess Kylie Minogue, whose "Can't Get You Out of My Head" necessitates hypnotherapy or sedation so that you can get it out of *your* head.

L is for George Lucas, whose *Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones* is also a long-winded nickname for Chelsea.

M is for Montreal, the feeder city for the erotic artistes who storm the stages (and occasionally laps) at Madonna's favorite strip bar, the Gaiety.


Enrique

N is for Chelsea's favorite leather emporium, the Noose (see also *R*, below).

O is for Rosie O'Donnell. Maybe you've heard of her.

P is for gay penguins, namely the New York Aquarium's Wendell and Cass, who've made headlines not only for their long-term monogamy but for having the neatest living quarters of all the penguins.

Q is for *Queer Duck* ("Like one in ten ducks, I'm gay!"), the obscenely funny Showtime cartoon.

R is for totally raunchy, which is what gay nightlife has become post-Giuliani.

S is for SBNY, the new name for the gay bar Splash—not to be confused with the *other* SBNY, Sperm Bank of New York, an independent (and unrelated) New York cell-and-tissue bank.

T is for straight (but gay-iconic) Calvin Klein model Travis, whose crotch reportedly has its own agent now (it's hoping for a Fox or WB development deal).

U is for HBO's morbidly fascinating *Six Feet Under*, from the (gay) Oscar-winning screenwriter Alan Ball.

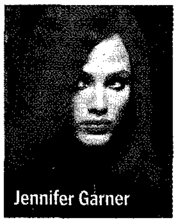
V is for digital video, which has caused an xxxplosion in amateur gay porn.

W is for "Weekend Update" on *Saturday Night Live*, simply because we love straight geek-chic lesbian icon Tina Fey and her equally straight but just as lovely co-anchor Jimmy "Like My Hair Gel?" Fallon.

X is for XL, the $2.5 million Chelsea gay bar (*Sex and the City* filmed here) with the XL drink prices and the XS T-shirts on the bartenders.

Y is for straight MTV newsboy Gideon Yago (Tina Fey's male geek-chic counterpart).

Z is for Liza with a *z*, who we hear just married some straight dude.


Jennifer Garner

nobody cruises you, Taylor's is right across the street so you can get a big cookie instead.

ALAN CUMMING, actor-writer-director

» My friend Carmine. I met him when I was doing *Cabaret* and he was working security at Studio 54. He's from the Bronx and he's Italian, and I'd take him somewhere gay and I'd think, *You know, Carmine, he might not like this*—and he'd know all the drag queens there. I love how he so lacks prejudice of any kind about sexuality. He represents to me a really great spirit of New York, about accepting differences. He's straight as a die. Believe me, I've tried.

ANN NORTHROP, co-host of *Gay USA* on Channel 35

» Cruising gorgeous elegant women on the Upper East Side. (Now, if only I could figure out how to actually meet them.)

EMIL WILBEKIN, editor-in-chief of *Vibe* magazine

» Going to "Earth" at Exit II at 10 A.M. on Sunday to dance to Junior Vasquez's remixes of Angie Stone and Jill Scott.

» Homothugs: Only in New York can you see a Cadillac Escalade rolling down 125th Street filled with thugged-out young black and Latino gay men blasting Jay-Z or Mary J. Blige! Holla!

» Safety in numbers: There are so many powerful, talented, successful, and creative gay people in New York City. It's inspiring and empowering!

PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, HENRY MCGEE/GLOBE PHOTOS; VICCARI/LIAISON; COURTESY OF NEW YORK AQUARIUM; COURTESY OF EMIL WILBEKIN; COURTESY OF TOUCHSTONE TELEVISION/GETTY IMAGES.

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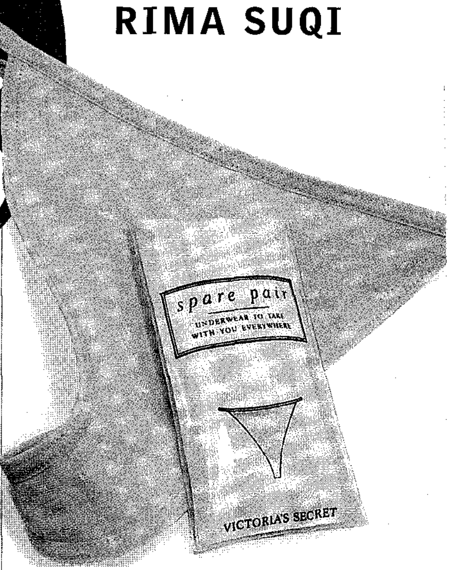
Best Bets

RIMA SUQI

Sittin' Pretty Just in time for summer, Ikea introduces new pieces in its groovy PS line. Our favorites: a lacquered rattan chair and footstool, both designed by James Irvine. They're light, easy to put together, and give you a lot of style for not a lot of money (chair, $69; stool, $30).

► **IKEA**
1100 Broadway Mall, Hicksville/516-681-4532
1000 Ikea Drive, Elizabeth, New Jersey/908-289-4488
800-434-IKEA
www.ikea-usa.com



String Theory A girl on the go never knows when she might need an extra pair of underwear. So Victoria's Secret created the Spare Pair Panty, a little cotton thong in a package so tiny it fits in your pocket. Choose from black, white, light blue, and pink, and sizes small, medium, and large ($5).

► **VICTORIA'S SECRET**
1981 Broadway, at 67th Street
646-505-2280

PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL KRAUS

RIO
AMSTERDAM

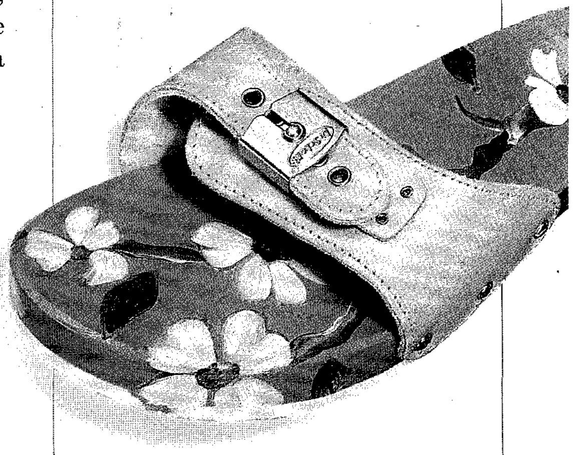
Walk in the Clouds

French artist Frederique Thomas photographs cloud formations in her travels around the world. Her dreamy pictures from Rio, Aspen, London, Pont Aven, Amsterdam, and Delhi are silk-screened on a set of drinking glasses—a perfect gift for armchair travelers ($15 each).

► **MXYPLYZYK**
125 Greenwich Avenue/212-989-4300

► **AUTO**
805 Washington Street/212-229-2292

► **THE CLAY POT**
162 Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn/718-788-6564



Hip to Be Square

Susan Ward's handmade designs usually cost hundreds of dollars, but she recently introduced a line of six-inch-by-six-inch glass plates (the perfect catchall for change or cuff links) at a much more affordable price. All are hand-painted with an original image and backed in felt. Themes range from golf to globes and maps to farm animals, like the rooster shown here ($45).

► **BERGDORF GOODMAN**
754 Fifth Avenue, at 58th Street
212-753-7300

Play Footsie

Tired of your old drugstore Dr. Scholl's? Try Olive & Bette's sassy customized versions. Hand-painted with cherries, lobsters, pink poodles, or dogwoods (pictured), the wood-soled slides come with a shoe bag and a pair of matching nail polishes ($175).

► **OLIVE & BETTE'S**
1070 Madison Avenue,
near 81st Street/212-717-9655
158 Spring Street/646-613-8772
252 Columbus Avenue,
near 72nd Street/212-579-2178

Show Your Stripes

Rafe's new canvas cosmetic bags are too cute to keep stashed in the bathroom. They're super-functional (one has a removable pouch inside; another comes with a built-in mirror), and they double as little clutches for a summer night out on the town. There are five styles ($85–$195).

► **RAFE NEW YORK**
1 Bleecker Street/212-780-9739

► **SAKS FIFTH AVENUE**
611 Fifth Avenue, at 49th Street
212-753-4000

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Bronze Medalists

If the Bahamas are out of your budget, and you've resolved to break your Portofino habit, these are your golden tickets.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A PAIR OF toned, tanned legs to set off a flirty spring sundress. The toned part's up to you and your Stairmaster. As for the tanning, that we can help you with—and help is no farther away than your local drugstore. We tried out a flurry of this season's new self-tanners. Here, the ones we liked best.

For the quickest fix, try **Bain de Soleil**'s Streakguarde; our tester liked that it took just a few minutes and left her with a smooth finish even on her heels and knees. **Neutrogena**'s Instant Bronze Foam was another favorite ($10 each at Duane Reade).

If you have a little more time—say, an hour or so—pick a product that acts more slowly (you can see it work and can take it off when your skin's the color you want). Potions to try: **Clinique**'s lotion for your face ($15.50 at Bloomingdale's and Macy's) and **Coppertone**'s Endless Summer ($11.99 at Duane Reade) for your body. For a very subtle effect, one of our testers loved **Elizabeth Arden**'s Quick Spray ($21 at Lord & Taylor), which yielded smooth, natural color with no mess.

AJA MANGUM

Picks of the Week

Sales beginning through Tuesday, April 30.

Badgley Mischka's glamorous eveningwear's up to 90 percent off ($50 to $950). Metropolitan Pavilion, 123 W. 18th St., fourth fl. (212-921-1585); A.E., M.C., V.; 4/25–4/26 (9-8); 4/27–4/28 (9-6).

Vera Wang's bridalwear is 50 to 70 percent off ($75 to $2,500). Hotel Pennsylvania, 401 Seventh Ave., near 32nd St. (212-575-6400); A.E., M.C., V.; 4/27 (9-5).

CLINIQUE
self-sun
face
BAIN de SOLEIL
STREAKGUARDE
Elizabeth Arden
Quick Spray
Oil-Free
Self-Tanner
for the Body
Coppertone
ENDLESS SUMMER
Sunless Tanning Lotion
LIGHT/MEDIUM
Neutrogena
Instant Bronze

Judith Leiber's sparkly evening bags are half off ($50 to $5,000). 20 W. 33rd St., second fl. (212-736-4244); A.E., M.C., V.; 4/25–4/26 (8:30-3).

Versace for women, men, and kids is up to 70 percent off ($30-$2,000). The Metropolitan Pavilion, 110 W. 19th St. (212-813-0190); A.E., M.C., V.; 4/24–4/26 (noon-7); 4/27 (10-5).

Tote Le Monde's sleek totes and evening bags (at stores like Barneys) are up to 60 percent off ($30 to $175). 50 W. 29th St., room 12E (212-951-7140); cash; 4/24–4/25 (11-7); 4/26 (9-3).

Escada women's clothes and accessories are up to 90 percent off ($33 to $440). 135 W. 18th St. (800-869-8424); A.E., M.C., V.; 4/25–4/26 (10-8); 4/27–4/28 (10-6).

Maria Turgeon's colorful bags are up to 60 percent off ($20 to $250). 153 W. 27th St. (212-229-0077); cash only; 4/24–4/26 (10-6).

Tahari's women's clothes are up to 80 percent off ($35 to $200). 20 W. 57th St., sixth fl. (877-579-0222); A.E., M.C., V.; 4/24–4/27 (10-6; Thurs. till 7, Sat. till 4).

AIDS Community Research Initiative of America's benefit sale has work from famous contemporary artists for $400 and up. Admission is $10. Charles Cowles Gallery, 537 W. 24th St. (212-924-3934, ext. 107); A.E., M.C., V.; 4/27 (10-4).

New York Design Center's showrooms are clearing everything from upholstered chairs to table lamps for 40 to 70 percent off ($100 to $4,000). 200 Lexington Ave., at 32nd St. (212-679-9500); A.E., M.C., V.; 4/25–4/27 (9-5; Sat. from 10).

Nancy Koltes loungewear is up to 65 percent off ($70–$270). 560 Seventh Ave., at 40th St., second fl. (718-767-1656); A.E., M.C., V.; Mon.-Wed. 9-6:30; 4/22–4/24.

Trussardi has stylish men's and women's clothes for up to 80 percent off. Suits are $325 to $525. 20 W. 57th St., sixth fl. (212-246-9860); A.E., M.C., V.; Wed., Fri. 10-6, Thurs. 10-7, Sat. 10-4; 4/24–4/27. ■

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PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE SCAFURO.

Fly the Hungry Skies

If you've traveled by plane since September, chances are you've landed hungry. Most domestic carriers dropped meal services to cut costs following the terrorist attacks—and many still aren't bothering to warn travelers, who often learn there's no food only after they've boarded. Today, meal service is being restored—slowly: United is feeding its Premier class on selected flights, but economy class still doesn't eat on most trips under 1,700 miles; American Airlines is reinstituting meals on a few business routes; USAirways has restored some first-class meals, but coach still gets just snacks (and only on flights over 1,000 miles); and Delta hasn't amended its post-9/11 cutbacks at all. Only Continental's passengers have enjoyed uninterrupted food service. Be sure to call ahead to find out exactly what will be served, and beware: Some airlines say they distribute "snack bags," but on one American flight that meant a half-frozen bagel and a bag of raisins. BETSY GOLDBERG

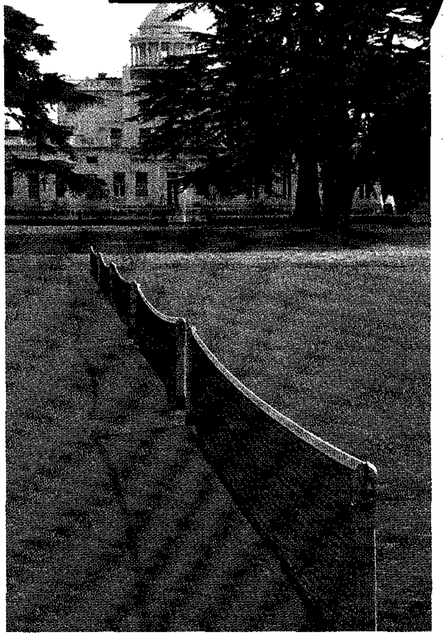
Southern Comforts

Whether you're taking in India.Arie at this year's Jazz Fest (April 26–May 5) or holding out for a quieter weekend in June, a visit to New Orleans this spring doesn't have to mean Emeril, the House of Blues, and Windsor Court. The recently opened Restaurant August (504-299-9777) offers a crafty take on American-Creole fusion; in a similarly nouveau vein is Stella! (504-587-0091), a new eatery on a quiet street in the French Quarter.

Club kids are currently crowding the Shim Sham Club (504-299-0666) to see up-and-coming acts like the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and Princess Superstar. And several hotels are offering home-style twists on traditional big-city accommodations. There are large, comfy suites at Melrose Mansion, a recently converted Victorian-era home (504-944-2255); residential-style lofts at the brand-new Loft 523 (504-200-6523); and hard-to-come-by privacy at Soniat House, another converted home—this one a nineteenth-century gem tucked away in the French Quarter (800-544-8808). ETHAN BROWN

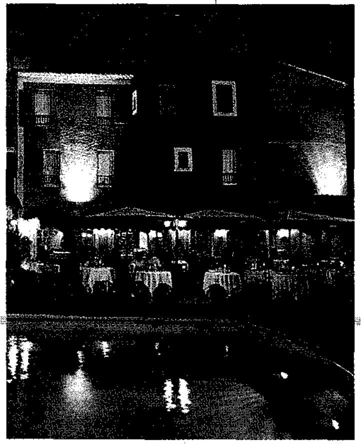
DEAL OF THE WEEK

Design house Givenchy quietly opened a spa last year just 30 minutes outside of Montreal. Now the riverfront refuge is offering *New York* readers 30 percent off any treatment plus a free room upgrade at the adjoining hotel, Hostellerie Les Trois Tilleuls, when you book during May (800-263-2230; spagivenchy.com).



Keep On the Grass

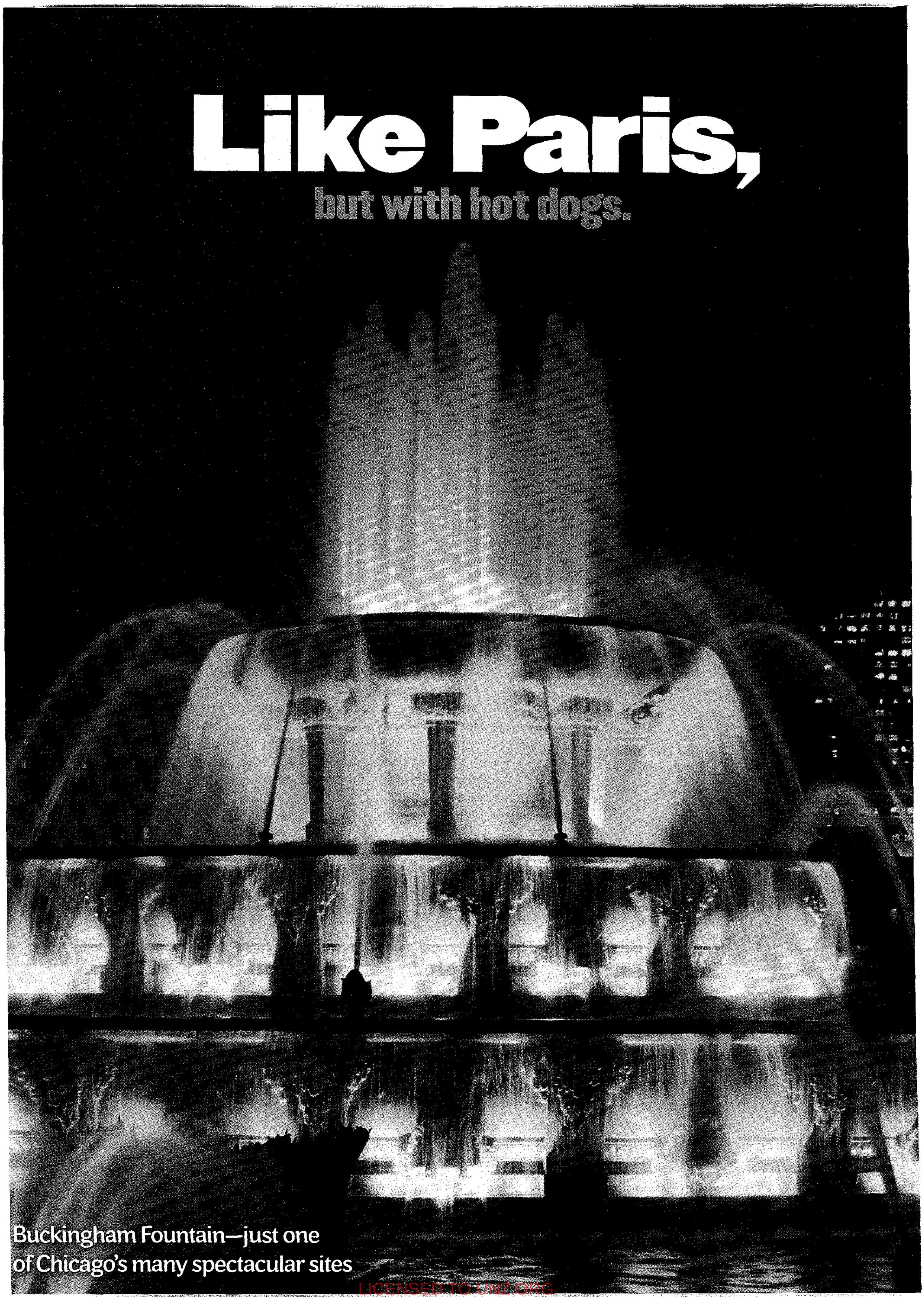
When the Stoke Park Club, a venerable private golf and tennis club that doubles as a resort on the outskirts of London, decided to open a new spa, it consulted the beauty editor of a top British fashion magazine. No wonder the 55,000-square-foot Spa SPC, which opens this summer, will have plenty of Shiseido and la prairie products on hand. Hotel guests can access the spa as well as all sporting facilities (golf course, indoor pool, fishing ponds) that members like Guy Ritchie, Hugh Grant, and Nicole Kidman use regularly. And if you missed out on Wimbledon tickets this year, the top seeds can be seen practicing their backswings the week before the event (June 19–22) on Stoke Park's brand-new grass courts—the only ones in Europe that meet Wimbledon specifications. (For reservations, call 877-468-3585; doubles start at $390 a night.)

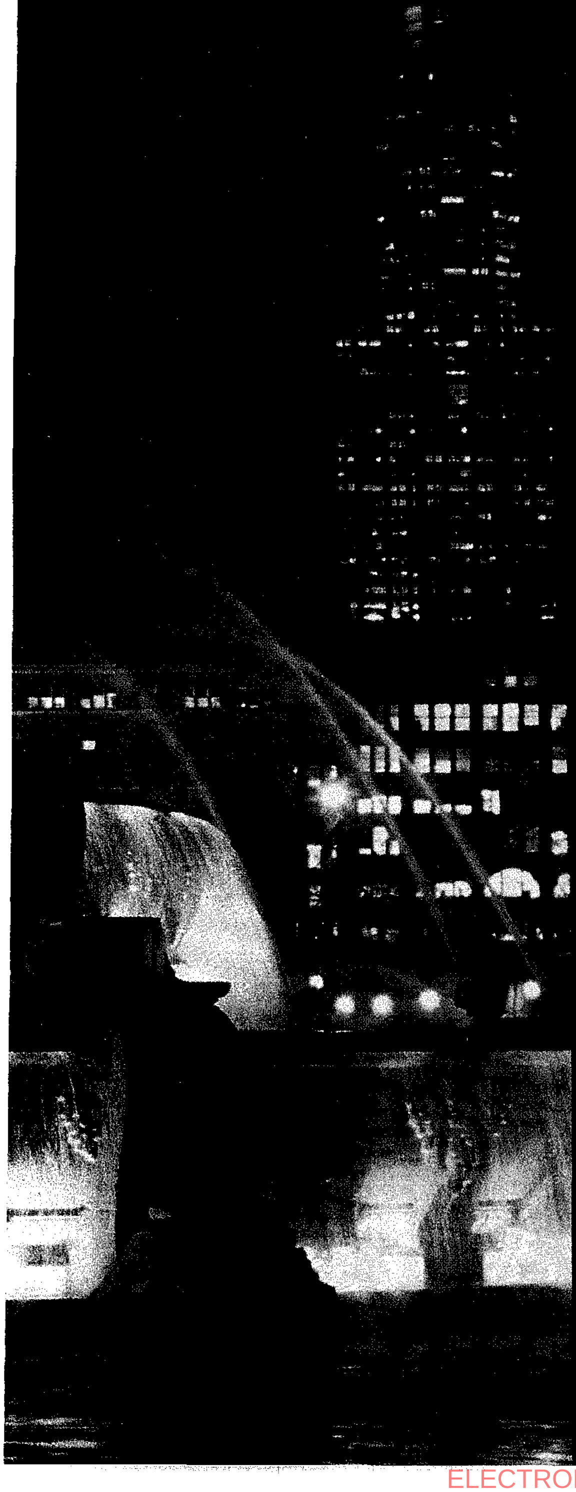


etc.

SPOON FEEDING Alain Ducasse is opening a new alfresco dining spot next week: Spoon Byblos, a Mediterranean version of his popular Spoon Food & Wine restaurant in Paris, opens April 24 at the Byblos Hotel in St.-Tropez (pictured; 33-4-94-56-68-00). **MAY DAY** Built in 1816, Cape May's Congress Hall reopens next month after a $22 million restoration. Most rooms have ocean views and have been upgraded with details like original porcelain tiles and cool bathtubs from the twenties (609-884-8421; summer rates from $150). **REMOTE CONTROL** Soon you'll be able to book a trip without leaving your couch: USA's new travel channel, launching this fall, will feature and sell destination packages on the air, akin to the network's Home Shopping experience. **FAST TRACK** From July 20 to September 7, the high-speed Eurostar train will be offering a brand-new summer route between London and Avignon. The six-hour trip runs Saturdays only, and costs $188 round-trip (800-367-6782).

PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP, COURTESY OF STOKE PARK CLUB; BOTTOM, COURTESY OF HOTEL BYBLOS ST.-TROPEZ.
ILLUSTRATION BY MARCOS CHIN/WWW.AGOODSON.COM.


Like Paris,
but with hot dogs.
Buckingham Fountain—just one
of Chicago's many spectacular sites



CHICAGO

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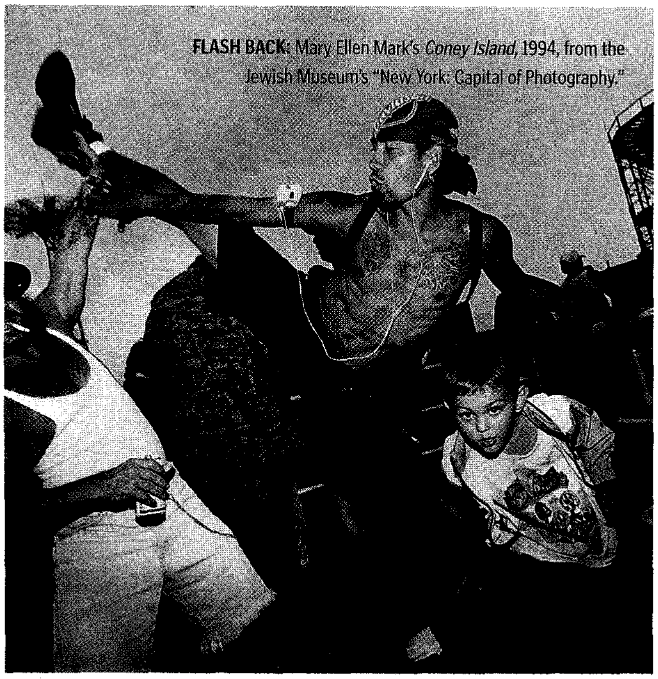
cue

A WEEKLY GUIDE TO CULTURE AND UPCOMING EVENTS • Edited by Christopher Bonanos



FLASH BACK: Mary Ellen Mark's *Coney Island*, 1994, from the Jewish Museum's "New York: Capital of Photography."

ART

New York: Capital of Photography

Critic and photography historian Max Kozloff guest-curates the Jewish Museum's show of more than 100 prints by the most innovative street photographers of the past century. **(Begins April 28; see listing, page 85.)**

MOVIES

Dogtown and Z-Boys

You might not know what an Ollie is—as it happens, it's a skateboard leap—but you'll have picked up all the lingo by the end of Stacy Peralta's film: A Best Director winner from Sundance, it's a study of the youth movement begun by surfer-inspired SoCal punks in the mid-seventies. Sean Penn narrates. **(Opens April 26; see interview, page 77.)**

NIGHTLIFE

When Love Speaks to You

That inimitable chanteuse Karen Akers returns to the Algonquin's Oak Room to perform a new set of love songs by Jacques Brel and Edith Piaf, as well as two numbers from *The Fantasticks* to mark the end of its run. **(April 30; see listing, page 98.)**

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Oberon

Robert Bass, the Collegiate Chorale's music director, completes the group's sixtieth season with Weber's operatic rendering of the myth of Oberon and Titania—a perfect way to celebrate the rites of spring. **(April 23; see listing, page 99.)**

BOOKS

Tuxedo Park

Jennet Conant's study of Wall Street mogul and amateur scientist Alfred Lee Loomis is a conspiracy theorist's dream come true: Loomis's mansion turned lab accommodated the likes of Albert Einstein and Ernest O. Lawrence, developing radar technologies that helped win World War II—and planting the seeds that led to the Manhattan Project. **(Simon & Schuster; $26; in bookstores now.)**

RESTAURANTS

12th Annual Windows on Long Island Wine

All proceeds from this hugely popular tasting and silent auction—formerly held at Windows on the World, now at Guastavino's—will benefit Windows of Hope and the Earth Pledge Foundation. **(April 29; $100 in advance, $125 at the door; for more information, call 212-725-6611, extension 225.)**

THEATER

Thoroughly Modern Millie

Yeah, another sixties movie becomes a Broadway show—but this time, we've been won over by star Sutton Foster, who manages to fill Julie Andrews's formidable shoes. **(See John Simon's review, page 53.)**

GRIST FOR THE MILLIE: Sutton Foster.

TOP five

Brit Bands in New York

Deep down, we all prefer fries and a Coke to tea and crumpets. But when it comes to rock, the door the Fab Four kicked in just keeps opening wider and wider. These excellent imports invade New York this week. (*See page 96 for venue details.*)

1. Spiritualized

Front man Jason Pierce (remember him from the eighties outfit Spaceman 3?) ditched his latest band in favor of a 100-piece orchestra for last year's *Let It Come Down*—but he's back with his eight new mates at the Beacon this week. **(Beacon Theater, April 24.)**

2. Paul McCartney

Sometime between *Target Stars on Ice* and *Blues Clues Live!*, our favorite Wing will fill the Garden with the sounds of *Driving Rain*. Expect plenty of Beatles classics, teary tributes, and—no lie—circus performers. **(Madison Square Garden, April 26–27.)**

3. Super Furry Animals

If you miss Beatle Paul, leap one degree of separation and catch these quirky Welshmen, whose new album, *Rings Around the World*, features a cameo by the veggie ex-Beatle in which he munches celery to the beat. **(Irving Plaza, April 24.)**

4. Neil Halstead

Slowdive alum Neil Halstead has gone solo, temporarily leaving behind Mojave 3 and embracing his stripped-down country tastes on *Sleeping on Roads*. Order a Red Bull—his pretty lullabies might leave your lids a bit droopy. **(Knitting Factory, April 23.)**

5. The Cranes

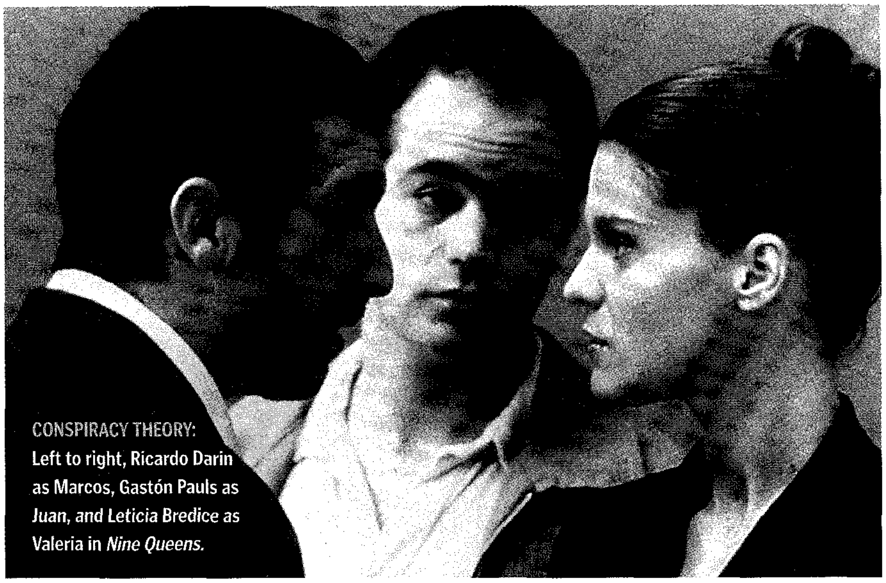
Yes, these goth-ish shoegazers are still around, and yes, Alison Shaw's creepy, ethereal voice still sounds the same. A onetime Cure opening act, they're now headlining their first U.S. tour in five years. **(Knitting Factory, April 27–28.)**

MONICA KHEMSUROV

PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, COURTESY OF MARY ELLEN MARK; JOAN MARCUS.

True Lies

Nine Queens, a lively thriller from Argentina, is an honest film about dishonesty; *Murder by Numbers* screams *career makeover* for Sandra Bullock.



CONSPIRACY THEORY: Left to right, Ricardo Darin as Marcos, Gastón Pauls as Juan, and Leticia Bredice as Valeria in *Nine Queens.*

FINALLY, A MOVIE ABOUT CON artists that *isn't* made by David Mamet. **Nine Queens**, written and directed by Argentina's Fabián Bielinsky, certainly draws on Mamet's work and, to a lesser extent, movies like *The Sting,* but American audiences will probably find the film exotic. Argentines, who have suffered through their country's recent economic collapse, may have a more cynical view. Con artistry in this film is both a genre convention and a metaphor for a wider corruption.

Bielinsky doesn't make explicit the political meanings, and his film works perfectly well as a straight thriller. It's about two small-time bunko artists, Marcos (Ricardo Darin) and Juan (Gastón Pauls), who meet up accidentally and then, after a few trial scams, devise a half-million-dollar con game involving a forged set of rare Weimar Republic stamps called the Nine Queens. Marcos is the older and more worldly of the two men, while the fresh-faced Juan is the con artist you would never suspect. His main asset, according to Marcos, is that he looks like a nice guy—something that Marcos, with his trim-cut-Mephistopheles couture, would never be accused of. In the best scene in the film, the one that really expands the terror, Marcos points to the teeming passersby on a downtown street and identifies all the swindlers lurking for prey. It's as if we were suddenly shown an infrared image of an ordinary urban scene, illuminating the rottenness within. We're looking not at a parallel universe but at our own, devoid of sentiment or illusion.

Nine Queens
Directed by Fabián Bielinsky; starring Ricardo Darin and Gastón Pauls.

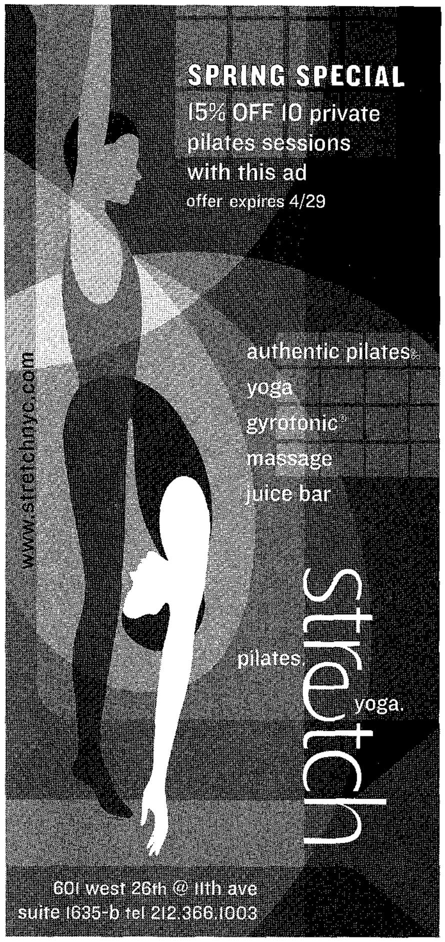
Murder by Numbers
Directed by Barbet Schroeder; starring Sandra Bullock and Ben Chaplin.
See Movies listings for details.

If *Nine Queens* were a great film, instead of just a very good one, this rottenness would be so pervasive that it would burst the bounds of the plot; it would make us shudder. Instead, except for that one downtown scene, Bielinsky keeps things on a fairly even keel. He's a conventional storyteller with a few good scams up his sleeve, and, perhaps wisely, he doesn't overplay his hand. Cosmic terror doesn't come naturally to him, as it does to an Argentine like, say, Jorge Luis Borges, and he's smart enough not to try to be something he isn't. His philosophy, at least in this film, can be summed up as "Who isn't a thief?" But it's not a question that eats away at him. It's more like a game-opener, a way to get the ball rolling.

What makes the film more interesting than a Mamet con-artist movie like *Heist* is that Mamet's ascetic worldview is almost entirely defined by the hustle; he devises elaborate board games devoid of social context. *Nine Queens,* almost by necessity, is situated in a larger social scene, and no matter how much Marcos—or, by implication, Bielinsky—may rail on about how corrupt everyone is, that corruption nevertheless exists in a universe where it is still possible to see glimmers of humanity. When Juan cons an old woman, we can predict her sadness and we can see his remorse. We also feel, when the scam is going down, a furtive thrill. Bielinsky doesn't deny us the pleasures of the illicit in *Nine Queens* because he knows that, without them, there would be little to draw us into this world. He's made an honest movie about dishonesty.

IN **Murder by Numbers**, SANDRA BULLOCK plays Cassie Mayweather, a hardened homicide detective and crime-scene specialist who dresses almost exclusively in turtlenecks and black leather jackets. It's one of those roles that practically screams *career makeover*. I've never quite gotten Bullock's girl-next-door appeal, and it looks like she may not have, either. For much of her new movie, she seems more involved in her performance than she's been in years, maybe because, for a change, she's actually playing a character and not just a fuzzy replica of niceness. It's a "dark" version of her FBI-agent role in *Miss Congeniality.* But eventually, the role turns into its own species of cliché: the tough-tender woman wounded by men and smarter than everybody else. With her naïve new partner Sam (Ben Chaplin),

PHOTOGRAPH BY SILVIO BENITEZ.



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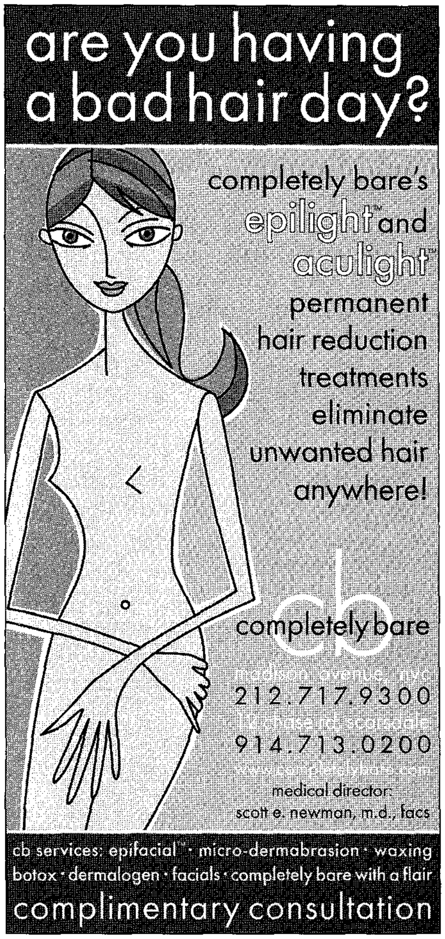

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Cassie is investigating the seemingly random murder of a woman in a small California coastal town where the chief suspects are a pair of local high-schoolers, Richard (Ryan Gosling, who has a quicksilver screen presence), a spoiled rich kid, and Justin (Michael Pitt), a glum brainiac who quotes Nietzsche. These Leopold-and-Loeb wannabes devise what they believe is the perfect murder and leave a trail of clues framing an innocent man. Director Barbet Schroeder is too elegant an artist for this material, which veers between routine cop-movie conventions and high-toned malarkey that seems a lot closer to Dungeons & Dragons than to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Murder by Numbers* does have one distinction: It may be the only film you see this year where a police detective is bitten by a baboon.

Enigma WANTS TO BE A THINKING PERSON'S thriller. Adapted from the Robert Harris best-seller by Tom Stoppard, the thinking person's playwright, it's about code breakers at Britain's top-secret Bletchley Park in March 1943. Big brain Tom Jericho (Dougray Scott), who makes Russell Crowe's John Nash seem rather hale by comparison, is the neurasthenic genius who earlier in the war cracked the German Enigma code. When the code is suddenly changed, just as an Allied shipping convoy is crossing the Atlantic with emergency supplies, Tom is re-recruited to head off disaster. Helping him out is Hester Wallace (Kate Winslet), a crossword whiz who works at Bletchley. She's paunchy and dresses like a frump—proof of her intelligence, I guess. Why is it that brilliant people in the movies are so rarely allowed to be glamorous? Somebody in Hollywood should start up a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Smart Persons.

Stoppard and his director, Michael Apted, must be aware of how dry their film is, because periodically they work in little thriller divertimenti—car chases and such—that only serve to point up how unthrilling everything is.

Early Hitchcock movies such as *The 39 Steps* and *The Lady Vanishes* managed to be both smart and exciting, and the same is true of almost any of Graham Greene's entertainments. *Enigma* is sometimes smart, and less often exciting, and almost never both at the same time. ■

Peter Rainer's reviews can be read at nymetro.com/archive/rainer.

IN BRIEF

Classical Music |
Peter G. Davis

Handel Festival

at Lincoln Center; *Agrippina* at the City Opera.

LINCOLN CENTER'S RECENT **Handel Festival,** IF that's the right word for such a scattershot mini-survey, brought some good things, most notably the belated New York debut of Les Musiciens du Louvre, a period-instrument orchestra founded in 1982 in Grenoble by Marc Minkowski. Their program in Alice Tully Hall—more Bach (Cantata No. 82) and Rameau (a suite from *Les Boréades*) than Handel (a concerto grosso and three arias sung by Anne Sofie von Otter)—was played with exquisite instrumental refinement, rhythmic buoyancy, and expressive rhetoric.

Like all the best conductors pegged as specialists, Minkowski really isn't one—his Offenbach (on disc at least) is no less idiomatic than his Bach, and I wouldn't mind hearing his Beethoven. He should be invited back to conduct our major orchestras as soon as possible. I was sorely disappointed in Von Otter, though, whose voice sounded uncharacteristically colorless and unfocused, with most of the coloratura shamelessly faked. The audience, however, received her with rapture.

Helping to fill out the Handelian picture, the City Opera has imported last summer's Glimmerglass-updated production of *Agrippina* to the State Theater. The show has been tightened and streamlined considerably since I saw it in August, and at least one bit of casting is wonderfully improved. Brenda Harris in the title role is a marvel of comic irony and glamorous deviousness, a perfect combination to put over director Lillian Groag's notion that the composer's youthful *jeu d'esprit* is actually a Hollywood screwball comedy in disguise. Harris looks great in Jess Goldstein's Joan Collins gowns, she packs a mean pistol, and she even sings the florid music with considerable grace and élan.

The best ingredient of the Glimmerglass edition—countertenor David Walker's suavely sung and engagingly acted Ottone—has been preserved, while the rest of the cast at least finds the fun of the piece even if the performance as a whole is not on the same high vocal or musical level as past City Opera Handel triumphs. Conductor Jane Glover keeps everything on track, but she makes what's left of the heavily cut score sound very dull and characterless. ■

THEATER JOHN SIMON

All in the Stars

Thoroughly Modern Millie may be a mixed musical bag, but Sutton Foster is Broadway's newest star; a misguided *Elephant Man* revival nonetheless confirms Billy Crudup's alpha status.

I MAY BE THE ONLY PERSON LIVING or dead who never saw the movie **Thoroughly Modern Millie**. But considering how inferior to the celluloid originals most recent stage versions have been, ignorance may indeed be bliss. Untrammeled by expectations, I was free to enjoy the show's pleasures, modest as they were, though sometimes even several millie-meters better than that.

The best thing about the show is not the book by the late Richard Morris, the movie's writer, and Dick Scanlan, although it is pleasantly silly. It is not the Scanlan lyrics, though they are pretty good. It is certainly not the new music by Jeanine Tesori, who can sometimes grope her way to a serviceable tune when not laboriously eking out a simulacrum. When toward the end of Act One a real melody made me prick up my ears, I thought, *This can't be Tesori*—and sure enough, it wasn't: "Jimmy" is one of the few golden oldies mercifully interspersed among the tinfoil newies.

No, the best things aren't even David Gallo's relentlessly inventive scenery, Martin Pakledinaz's tongue-in-cheek costuming, and Donald Holder's irrepressible lighting. Nor are they the cracklingly witty choreography of Rob Ashford, the swell orchestrations of Doug Besterman and Ralph Burns, and the nice dance arrangements by David Chase. The best things are the performances of Sutton Foster as a thoroughly model Millie, and Harriet Harris as the delectably villainous *faux*-Chinese hotel keeper and white slaver Mrs. Meers.

It is hard to believe that Foster is not a cartoon creation, which in this context is high praise. She is midway between goofy and goony, perhaps *goojy*, and well worth coining a new word for. Her adorably comic-strip face, rubber-puppet body and limbs, animation greater than Disney's, and clowning to give Bill Irwin pause add up to sheer mind-teasing and heart-tickling delight. Her mouth knows how to gape as if expecting a peeled grape to come flying into it. And she can turn gawkiness into something gazelle-like. Oh, and incidentally, this virtual unknown can act, sing, and dance up anything from a zephyr to a sirocco. Harris, who has been fine-tuning her inexhaustible comedic skills over some very funny but marginal parts in peripheral productions, emerges here in full fulgurant bloom. Her expressions are dearer than priceless, her timing sharp enough to shave with, and her intonations able to blend innuendo and a punch in the plexus with treacherous demureness. This, let us not mince words, is comic genius.

Thoroughly Modern Millie
Directed by Michael Mayer; starring Sutton Foster and Harriet Harris.

The Elephant Man
Revival of the Bernard Pomerance play; staged by Sean Mathias; starring Billy Crudup.
See Theater Listings for information.

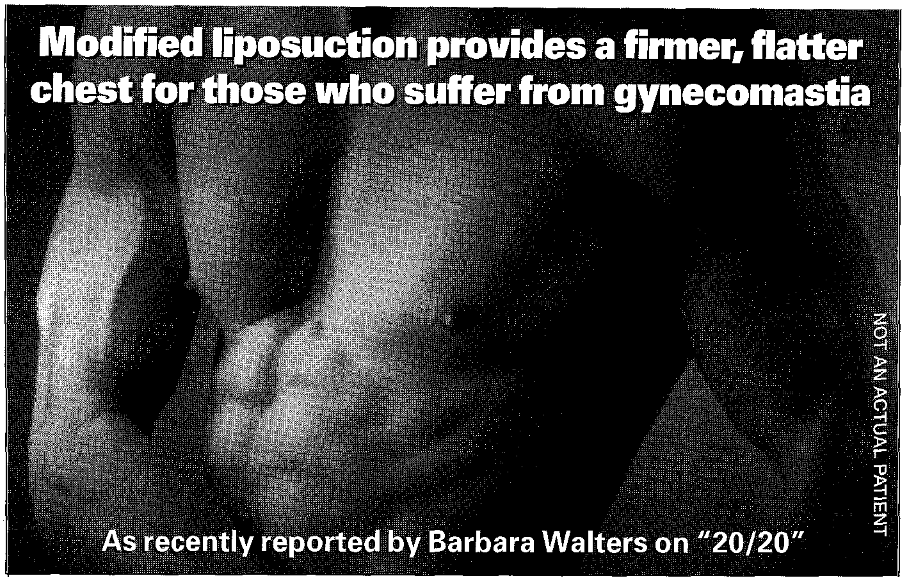
There are sterling contributions from the verbally and physically nimble Gavin Creel, the trumpetingly commanding Marc Kudisch, and several others, among them Sheryl Lee Ralph, who conjures up a tolerable Josephine Baker. Michael Mayer's direction holds things neatly together. If the movie *Millie* can top this, it must be tops for sure.

BERNARD POMERANCE'S **The Elephant Man** is—or was, before the present director, Sean Mathias, got hold of it—a worthy boulevard play. Its tragi-grotesque story was told with a touch too deliberate Brechtianizing, its points often made with a pointer in lieu of a pen. But it worked, which is something the British and brutish director cannot tolerate. Like Peter Sellars and others before him, Mathias will not leave well enough alone. But where the Midas touch, turning everything to gold, proved deleterious, the Mathias touch, turning everything to dross, seems highly profitable.

That customarily good designer Santo Loquasto, doubtless on the director's orders, has didactically turned the unit set into a giant sideshow tent, further emphasized by such fairway staples as fun-house mirrors, as well as a mysterious object like a huge now-transparent, now-opaque half of a round cheese that serves numerous purposes, all of them badly. Not a T is left undotted, not an I is left uncrossed. That each scene begins with a bold-lettered surtitle is not enough: The whole cast must declaim it simultaneously.

MARVELOUS MILLIE: Sutton Foster, in yellow, with the *Thoroughly Modern Millie* ensemble.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOAN MARCUS.



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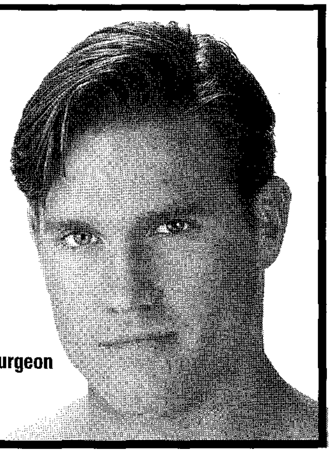

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Everything here is pomo with a vengeance. Extra characters are sitting or flitting along the sidelines, a bathtub is represented by a vast collapsed tent, and Merrick, the Elephant Man, is usually in his underwear, to show off a fine, albeit contorted, torso. The stage is suddenly outlined near the top with fluorescent light, and the profoundly unmusical Philip Glass provides background music that is never far enough back.

There is, though, Billy Crudup, whose performance as Merrick merits every superlative (and he the best possible chiropractor). He contorts his body and limbs with the kind of elegance to make the unbearable bearable, but never lets the sentimentalists off the hook. His defective speech manages also to be impeccable, and the entire performance radiates a deep but understated conviction, finding the exact proportions of humor and heartbreak.

Rupert Graves is quietly incisive and commanding as the relatively humane Dr. Treves, but Kate Burton is a trifle too actressy even for an actress portraying an actress. The others, notably including Jack Gilpin and Edmond Genest, are supportive enough, as are Loquasto's costumes and James F. Ingalls's lighting. The constant shifting of various objects by the cast may or may not delight the stagehands' union. The shifting of the director back to England should delight all.

CARL STERNHEIM'S COOL COMEDY **The Underpants** is almost unrecognizable in the grotesque farce Steve Martin has adapted it into, and the ludicrous travesty Barry Edelstein has staged. The actors are gravely miscast or misdirected, although Cheryl Lynn Bowers maintains some dignity as the heroine who dropped her panties in public (a lesser catastrophe than Martin's and Edelstein's losing their minds). . . . **Talk**, by 34-year-old Carl Hancock Rux, is a three-hour symposium about a fictional dead black writer, scantly published but greatly admired. The six symposiasts all had special connections to him and carry on flagrantly, in a play divided into four "modules." I lasted for one 90-minute module during which Rux managed to drop 68 droppable or semi-droppable names. If he was ridiculing his characters, that is way too much; if only himself, even more so. The actors have a fine chance to display their mnemonic skills at the service of an unmemorable piece of self-indulgence. ■

John Simon's reviews can be read at nymetro.com/archive/simon.

Forum and Function

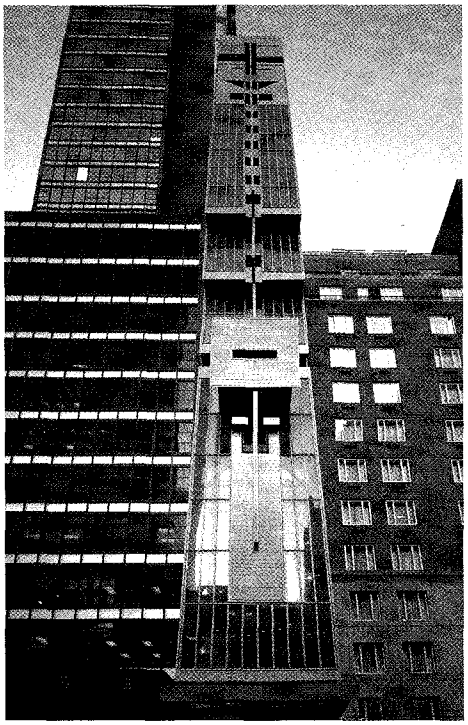
Raimund Abraham, our resident architectural mystic, pierces midtown's blandness with a home for the Austrian Cultural Forum that's as confrontational as it is soulful.

IT IS JUST A SLIVER OF LAND, 25 feet wide, originally meant for a townhouse. But when the Austrian Cultural Institute announced a competition for its 11 East 52nd Street headquarters nearly a decade ago, some 226 architects vied for the commission. Raimund Abraham, a crusty, outspoken professor at Cooper Union, won, but we have had to wait nearly a decade to see his vision realized.

The renamed **Austrian Cultural Forum** finally has opened its pivoting glass doors, and New Yorkers now have a spectacular addition to the short list of new structures that qualify as works of art. Abraham, who just renounced his Austrian citizenship to protest Jörg Haider's participation in the coalition government, has long practiced as New York's resident architectural mystic. On a block of stock, repetitive buildings, the Forum's 24-story façade is haunting, part totem pole of evocative, occult forms, part elongated mask with a focused, threatening gaze. The building rises vertiginously in terraced wedges that seem about to slip like falling blades. At a time when other architects are pursuing lightness, transparency, and concept, Abraham suspends the cascade of wedges in shadow, and makes glass look opaque and heavy. The symmetries are fearful.

Abraham has spent a lifetime thinking about how form, space, and matter yield soul: For him, there's a different, subjective, rather than objective, way of being a Modernist. "My architecture comes out of the meaning of a site," Abraham says, "and here I was interested in the void holding out against the massive lateral compression from the buildings on each side.

"Architecture is dangerous," he adds, "because each building has to defend itself against others. Architecture is ultimately violent; it disturbs an existing equilibrium. I needed a façade of armor to shield the building from the rest of the city."



SLICING THROUGH THE MUDDLE: The Austrian Cultural Forum.

All structures above a certain height in New York must include setbacks to allow light and air to reach the street, and Abraham uses dark wedges that look like precarious tectonic plates protecting an interior life.

The design, then, is not just an architectural product but a spirited form whose monumental anthropomorphism—with suggestions of eyes, a nose, a mouth, and a brow—recalls the monoliths on Easter Island. Each angled segment corresponds to an interior function as though in a Freudian interplay between the conscious façade and a subconscious life inside. The cube projecting toward the street, like a pulpit or diving board, contains the director's office. The multistory brows above house offices and a four-floor apartment for the director and his family.

Austrian Cultural Forum
Designed by
Raimund Abraham.

Monumental and formal outside, the intimately scaled interior contains a string of unique spaces. Entering visitors step into a succession of terraced exhibition rooms that lead down to the basement and up to the third floor in a flowing promenade that ends in a small, multiuse, double-height hall outfitted for music and film. "I wanted flowing space to overcome the narrowness," says Abraham.

The interiors are neither universal nor generic but specific, tailored, and unpredictable. The horizontally slotted window in the director's cube gives occupants seated at a meeting a framed view into the canyon of high-rise buildings outside. The tall vertical line on the front that recalls a nose corresponds to the staircase connecting the two floors of the library. Abraham has packed staircases, bathrooms, and elevators at the back of the building to push the habitable space forward to the windows and view.

The first several floors are intended for an active cultural program open to the public, and Abraham has created a spatially complex set of rooms, dense and intense rather than neutral. He challenges the director, Christoph Thun-Hohenstein, to find a resonance between the architecture and the Forum's program. Thun-Hohenstein has announced an ambitious year of programming around the theme of "Transforming Modernity," and he foresees experiments in artistic synthesis, with music composed for photographic exhibits, for example, and chamber music set in rooms arrayed in light grids. "The whole building," says Thun-Hohenstein, "is like a laboratory for us."

New Yorkers should stay tuned to see how well this intelligent and articulate piece of architecture can help provoke the life in the ambitious Forum it houses. ■

Joseph Giovannini's reviews can be read at nymetro.com/archive/giovannini.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID SUNDBERG/ESTO.

DANCE **TOBI TOBIAS**

After *Midnight*

He showed such great promise in early-career works like *At Midnight*—a revival of which is a high point of his new season—so why does Eliot Feld rely so much on gimmickry nowadays?

EVERY SO OFTEN, ELIOT FELD choreographs a piece to display the beauties of a particular dancer in his company, **Ballet Tech.** *Behold the Man,* given its premiere during the troupe's spring season at the Joyce, is an homage to Nickemil Concepcion, who is fully worthy of such attention. The extended solo constituting the first half of the piece shows off a soulful face that Manuel Álvarez Bravo might have photographed and a thickset boxer's body that adds luscious weight—rare in the realm of classical ballet—to the dancer's soft, fluid way of moving. In this solo, Concepcion conveys pure physical sensation—which remains strangely voluptuous despite the fact that as the dance progresses, his body appears to be increasingly inflicted with pain—and the impression of thought and feeling in response to these circumstances. All this is accomplished, mind you, without the dancer's resorting to anything that might be called acting.

LIGHT MOTIF: Nickemil Concepcion in Ballet Tech's *Behold the Man.*

Unfortunately, the choreography, set to austerely ominous music by David Lang and Brian Eno, depends on gadgetry. Concepcion appears nearly nude, outfitted only in webbing that's studded with lights the size of Ping-Pong balls. Midway through the piece, he's attached to a wrist harness, swung at a tilt through the darkened air, then whirled so swiftly that the lights form streaking paths like those of Saturn's rings. The title of the dance is, of course, a translation of *ecce homo,* the term used to refer to a depiction of Christ crowned with thorns. For thorns, Feld substitutes a headdress of the garishly colored tube balloons twisted to form animal shapes for children at street fairs and birthday parties. The headdress is created onstage; the balloons are even blown up onstage (by a stagehand in overalls). Concepcion submits to these prolonged, idiotic proceedings with a dignity and courage not out of keeping with the character he's playing. Finally, he's allowed to run free, the balloons streaming behind him, and he's such a compelling performer that you're almost persuaded to accept the image as a kind of apotheosis.

Ballet Tech
Various works choreographed by Eliot Feld; at the Joyce Theater.

Another novelty, *Lincoln Portrait,* looks to be Feld's response to September 11—part of the general public response that has Old Glory flying everywhere. More pageant than dance, it's a solemn promenade of "ordinary" people—nondancers, that is, representing disparate ages, ethnicities, and body types—to Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* and *Lincoln Portrait,* both composed following America's entry into the Second World War. The latter score incorporates a text drawn from Lincoln's morally resonant, plainspoken words, and these are delivered by an actor (Sam Waterston and Carmen De Lavallade alternated in the task).

A bevy of leotarded dancers invades the pedestrian crowd from time to time, performing what looks like a mid-century modern-dance exercise in ecstasy; inevitably, one of them bears a flag that ripples excitedly behind her as she leaps through the space. Any cross section of humanity is visually compelling, so the members of the onstage public are swell to look at, though their being dressed up to indicate different eras and occupations is a bit hokey. *Lincoln Portrait* can't lay claim to the innocence of a real school pageant, but it does, intentionally or not, co-opt some of the real deal's disarming naïveté.

Two other pieces introduced this season, *Skandia* and *Pianola,* proved to be examples of Feld's all too familiar resorting to dubious evocations of local color and vehement but pointless reiterative jiggling, respectively. The Conlon Nancarrow music for player piano used for *Pianola* was at least a bracing element. More significant than the season's new entries were the revivals of two ballets from his earliest (and, alas, most fertile) days—*At Midnight,* created in 1967, and the 1971 *Theatre.* Both are rich works—original, intelligent, and full of feeling—that promised a distinguished future for their choreographer. Some 30 years after their making, we have seen this undeniable talent continually dissipated in pieces that are childish, gimmicky, and obsessive. What happened? ■

Tobi Tobias's reviews can be read at nymetro.com/archive/tobias.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ELLEN CRANE.

TELEVISION JOHN LEONARD

The Great Warrior

Last year's Daddy Warbucks, Albert Finney smoothly steps into Winston Churchill's shoes for *The Gathering Storm;* the greater surprise is Vanessa Redgrave's powerful Clemmie.

WHEN WE FIRST MEET Winston Churchill in **The Gathering Storm** of the thirties, he is between government jobs, has neglected to pay the butcher, and is writing a biography of his ancestor the first Duke of Marlborough. Of that biography, Evelyn Waugh would later remark: "As history it is beneath contempt, the special pleading of a defense lawyer. As literature it is worthless. It is written in a sham Augustan prose which could only have been achieved by a man who thought always in terms of public speech, and the antitheses clang like hammers in an arsenal."

We wave good-bye to Winston only after he has come back in out of the cold, still clanging like a hammer, as first lord of the Admiralty in Neville Chamberlain's war cabinet. Eight months later, he will command the government. Never mind that somehow, in this otherwise meticulous TV film on which HBO and the BBC have conspired, the prime-ministerial transition from Stanley Baldwin to Chamberlain is so sped up and fuzzied over that Munich gets omitted. The important point is that all along, "warmonger" Winston had been right about Hitler, who worried him as much as Gandhi "and his seditious Hindus" did in India. England, in her hour of ultimate peril, needed an Augustan blowhard; the voters would turn him out of office the minute the war was over.

The Gathering Storm
Saturday, April 27;
8 to 9:45 P.M.; HBO.

INEVITABLE: Redgrave and Finney in *The Gathering Storm.*

Albert Finney is perhaps inevitable as Winston. After his Daddy Warbucks, who else to wear those bow ties, smoke those cigars, guzzle all that brandy and champagne, and dictate speeches from his bathtub? Vanessa Redgrave is rather more of a surprise as his wife, Clemmie; one more easily imagines Redgrave leading a government and winning a war than Finney. The other players are shrewdly chosen: Derek Jacobi as Stanley Baldwin; Jim Broadbent as Desmond Morton; Hugh Bonneville as Ivo Pettifer; and, especially, Linus Roache as Ralph Wigram, the Foreign Office worrier who slips Winston intelligence data on German rearmament, and the always wonderful Lena Headey as Ralph's wife, Ava, who has the movie's finest moment telling off the bully Pettifer.

As we'd expect from executive producers like the Scott brothers, Ridley and Tony, all this solemn history is agreeably tricked up in taxicabs, phone booths, and theater bars, not to mention poetry-quoting and landscape-painting. In our pomo age of television and skepticism, it is hard to take Churchill as seriously as he took himself. But that leaves us with Tony Blair.

- **America's First River: Bill Moyers on the Hudson** (April 23 and 24; 9 to 11 P.M.; Channel 13) follows the waterway into our economy, literature, art, and imagination, from the Catskills to West Point to New York City, from the conservation of its riverbanks to the polluting of its lifestream, all the way to Pete Seeger.

- **Without Warning** (APRIL 26; 9 to 11 P.M.; CBS) is a distinct improvement on the last "Diagnosis Murder" movie, involving not only a love affair between Steve (Barry Van Dyke) and a supermarket-tabloid reporter, but also an epidemic in a migrant-worker camp that has something to do with the bad behavior of a pharmaceutical company.

- **Living With the Dead** (APRIL 28 AND 30; 9 to 11 P.M.; CBS) squanders quite a lot of talent—Ted Danson, Mary Steenburgen, Queen Latifah, Michael Moriarty, Diane Ladd, and Jack Palance—on a serial-killer murder mystery that is solved only when the dead talk to Ted. Based on what purports to be the true-life story of the psychic James Van Praagh.

- **Gilda Radner: It's Always Something** (April 29; 9 to 11 P.M.; ABC) features Jami Gertz as an acceptable Gilda, clowning her way from the loss of her father to *Saturday Night Live* to Gene Wilder to ovarian cancer. But a snippet of the real thing at the end of the movie is what really hurts.

- **Jordan: The Royal Tour** (APRIL 29; 10 TO 11 P.M.; Travel Channel) is an oddly ingratiating hour in which we are introduced to King Abdullah II himself, who escorts us by motorcycle, camel, and his very own helicopter to a few of his favorite places, like Aqaba, Wadi Rum, and (wow!) Petra. ■

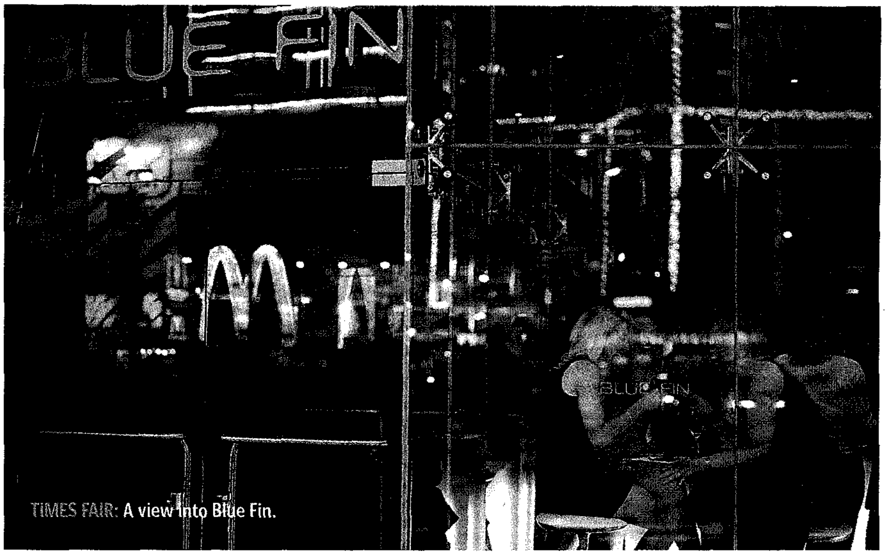
John Leonard's reviews can be read at nymetro.com/archive/leonard.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID JAMES/HBO.

Sharp Fin

Fight the tide of tourists and kids around Times Square and make your way to Stephen Hanson's Blue Fin, where the show-stopping décor and menu work swimmingly.

I DON'T WANT TO SOUND UNGRATEful—for years, the area was so bleak and dank that I avoided Times Square the way Jodie Foster avoids love scenes. Now it's brimming with energy and bustle, lit brighter than a Wal-Mart. But it's not the way I would have brought it back—it's all about kids. Anyone sporting a suit and manicure is supposed to go . . . where? "The gang on 42nd Street" that George M. Cohan yearned to mingle with isn't at the Virgin Megastore. Congrats if the WWF restaurant has rekindled your second childhood, or if Toys 'R' Us delights your second child, but what lure—other than Kathleen Turner's bruin-esque physique—is there here for grown-ups? Why hasn't Times Square given us an adult version of an indoor Ferris wheel?


TIMES FAIR: A view into Blue Fin.

Well, now it has. **Blue Fin**'s oh-so-grand staircase, set against an undulating wall of white waves, is not only a fitting centerpiece for a restaurant bold enough to open in this part of town without a theme, it is also a voyeur's paradise. Negotiating or watching others navigate this two-story descent is riveting theater. What's more, at either end of the staircase is proof that at least one man thinks Broadway can be classier than a carnival. It's obvious from his success with both Ruby Foo's and several packed restaurants with names ending in the word *Grill* that Stephen Hanson is a crowd-pleasing showman. Here he's assembled something better *and* greater: a 400-seat restaurant, unstinting in sophistication and skill, that retains the core elements of his past pleasers.

Blue Fin
1567 Broadway, at 47th Street (212-918-1400).

And it's not all been done for show, either. While the walls upstairs are as luxuriously burnished as a Bentley's dashboard, and downstairs' myriad mirrors play with backlighting like a wall of fountains, it's Blue Fin's two kitchens that will have you fighting your way back across Duffy Square. Dine on just the menu's sushi offerings, and chef Masa's artistry will match most any of the city's touted sushi temples. Tempura gracefully wraps a silky oyster roll, deftly scented with soy and ginger. Just a smack of vinegar and chili ignites a spicy tuna roll. The crunch of a shrimp roll unlocks a delicious blast of green curry. And whether your plate bears smoky shards of barbecued eel, sweet slices of fluke, or pools of uni, each bespeaks the confidence of someone who knows no additional embellishment is needed.

But as memorable as these morsels are, you'd be a fool to forsake the other side of Blue Fin's menu. Several years ago, chef Paul Sale's talent was cruelly squandered in a dim W hotel eatery called Icon. Hanson has shown him the light, and Sale rewards his customers with sautéed black bass in a wondrous pool of chive nage with a lush shrimp-and-asparagus risotto. Nifty pumpernickel croutons bob in a meaty, almost refreshing clam-and-lobster chowder. Beet-and-goat-cheese salad sports the surprise of macadamia nuts. Lustrous crescents of poached halibut splash in a lively ancho-chili-and-vegetable broth. Crab cakes should have the presence of the Caesar salad, and Sale has yet to make skate wing fly. But Chilean sea bass has a bouillabaisse worth bottling, and thyme-seared salmon surrounded by lentils, trumpet mushrooms, parsnip purée, and pesto drizzle is a celebration of riches without excess. Even the porterhouse is terrific, and fairly priced, too.

Is it wrong to rave about pastry chef Joseph Murphy's unabashedly dense ice cream? (Not if one is willing to also laud his sour-cherry almond cake, his understated McIntosh-apple-cider cake, a panna cotta destined to be gobbled too quickly, and an astonishing crème brûlée.) And would one's meal be as enjoyable if the restaurant lacked a staff whose unflagging charm turns what could be a madhouse into a many-splendored thing? But the big question is this one: Would I be as tickled by Blue Fin if there weren't the parade on the steps? The answer is yes. It's all just too smart. But *with* the staircase? Well, give my regards to Broadway and tell Blue Fin I'll be back ere long. ■

Blue Fin, lunch, Monday to Sunday, 11:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.; dinner, Sunday to Tuesday, 5:30 P.M. to midnight. Wednesday and Thursday till 12:30 A.M., Friday and Saturday till 1 A.M. Appetizers, $7 to $15; entrées, $19 to $38. A.E., M.C., V.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNETH CHEN.

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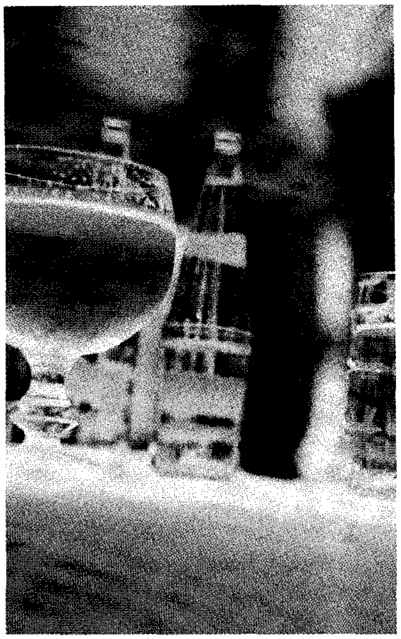
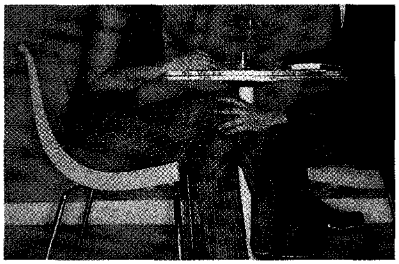
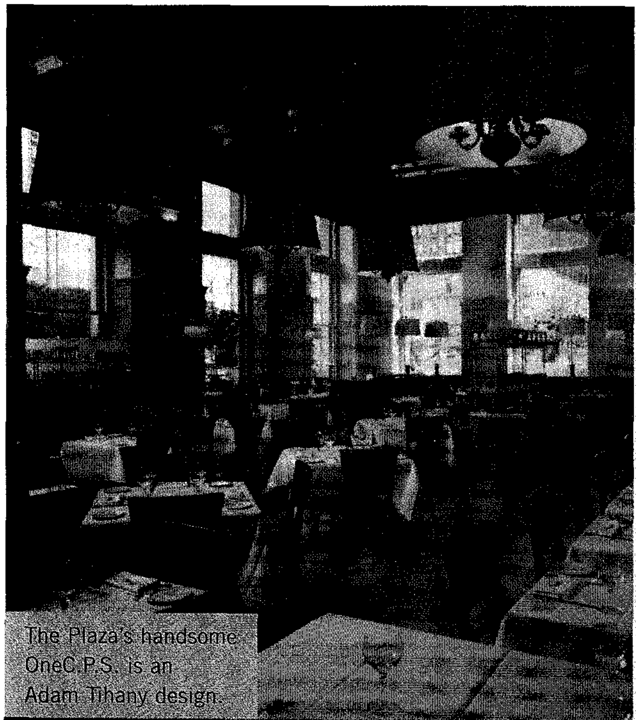




NEW YORK IS THE MOST RENOWNED RESTAURANT AND BAR TOWN IN THE WORLD. FROM TRIBECA TO THE UPPER WEST SIDE, YOU'LL FIND AS MANY OLD-WORLD BISTROS AS HAUTE HOT SPOTS. THE BARS HERE ARE JUST AS DIVERSE, FROM OLD-TIME WATERING HOLES TO SUPER-MOD LOUNGES.



The Plaza's handsome OneC.P.S. is an Adam Tihany design.

New York Classics

AT **ONEC.P.S.** (ONE CENTRAL PARK SOUTH, 583-1111; www.smithandwollensky.com), restaurant designer Adam Tihany has transformed The Plaza's ultra-formal Edwardian Room—installed in 1907—into a light and airy restaurant with oversize windows that offer unobstructed Central Park and Fifth Avenue views from every table. Inside, polished woods have replaced the dark-oak panels and the eight original chandeliers have been re-covered with oversized crimson shades to draw attention to the decorative ceiling. On the casual menu, created by executive chef David Burke, are such house specialties as a dry-aged, prime filet mignon served on the bone, steak or mussel frites, and rack of lamb with BBQ shepherd's pie—all served with an award-winning wine list, of which over 100 are available by the glass. If you're dining with eight or more, be sure to request one of two private dining rooms. The most popular is the glass-enclosed chef's table with views of the Grand Army Fountain and the kitchen. The other, the downstairs Wine Room, is a more exclusive space, which offers a quieter atmosphere. This space is ideal for business groups. The apple tart is legendary here and, if you're in the neighborhood and crave an off-hours meal, the restaurant offers a Leisure Time

Creative Services Director: Beverly Hood Allen Editor: Christy Casamassima Creative: Wink Creative Research: Lory Conklin

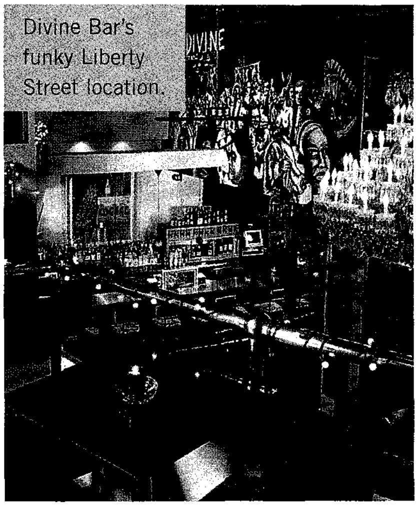
NEW YORK RESTAURANT AND BAR GUIDE

menu with in-between lunch and dinner service. On weekends, stop by for the delicious Red Rooster brunch, featuring tasty dishes served on bright yellow painted rooster plates, including out-of-this-world eggs benedict, banana and raspberry pancakes, and striped bass with shrimp dumplings. To complete the motif, each table is set with a ring of eggs. "We wanted a fun, casual restaurant, perfect for Eloise," says CEO Alan Stillman.

A NEW YORK INSTITUTION, **Ben Benson's Steak House** (123 W. 52nd St., 581-8888; www.benbensons.com), is a favorite among celebrities like George Steinbrenner and Al Roker who frequent this eatery regularly for superb prime-aged steaks, great seafood, and a wine list that has garnered the *Wine Spectator*'s highest accolades. In an era of chain steakhouses, this singular establishment stands out because of the attentive and personal service of owner Ben Benson. The clubby, handsome dining room is filled with classic-American sporting antiques and softened with flowers and artwork. The famed bar was serving 10-ounce martinis in huge Art Deco-style martini glasses long before this cocktail classic staged its recent comeback. Signature dishes include first-rate steaks, prime rib, filet mignon, and lamb chops, and justly acclaimed seafood selections. ●

Spring dining at Ben Benson's Steak House

LADIES WHO BRUNCH. DO YOU REALLY NEED AN EXCUSE TO GET TOGETHER WITH YOUR GAL PALS? STARVED FOR SUGGESTIONS? HERE'S WHAT'S ON THE MENU.



Divine Bar's funky Liberty Street location.

Wine (Beer) and Song

YOU'LL FIND 65 VARIETIES OF wines by the glass and 15 wine-tasting flights at the two **Divine Bar** locations in town (55 Liberty St., 2nd floor, 791-WINE; 244 E. 51st St., 319-WINE; www.divinebar.citysearch.com). While the uptown location promises a funky *Alice-in-Wonderland* duplex-lounge feel, the Liberty Street outpost offers more of an eclectic Broadway-theater-style vibe. Reserve ahead for the May 14 *Absolutely Fabulous* Party at the Liberty Street location. In honor of the show, you'll indulge in unlimited tastes of Veuve Clicquot Champagne and Stoli cocktails while "Patsy" and "Edina" pass out cigarettes ($35; call 791-WINE to reserve). On May 6, the uptown location will hold a "Fromagerie Party" with platters of 18 diverse cheeses accompanied by flatbreads, wines, and lectures on the pairings ($35; call 319-WINE to reserve). Ten percent of profits from both events will be donated to Squad 18 of the FDNY.

AT **HEARTLAND BREWERY & Chop House** (127 W. 43rd St., 646-366-0235 or party hot line, 582-2057; www.heartlandbrewery.com), new to Times Square, you'll find a grown-up version of the two popular Heartland Breweries newly installed in the heart of the Theater District. Sample award-winning handcrafted beers (including the new Indian River light beer—with orange oil, coriander, and a special Belgian yeast) as well as a tasty American menu and a prix fixe, pre-theater dinner menu crafted by chef Richard Pietromonaco, formerly of Tribeca Grill. This bold, handsome restaurant features three private dining rooms, and blends the rich character of the steakhouses of old with a modern sensibility of a state-of-the-art brewery. ●

Heartland's latest venue is a Theater District hit.

SMITH & WOLLENSKY 23 18 20 $58
797 Third Ave. (49th St.), 212-753-1530
"Carnivores in their element" hail Alan Stillman's "classic" Midtown steakhouse, a now-nationwide "tradition" for "tremendous" cuts of "mouth-watering" red meat consumed among "real men" (and "man-watching" women); the "hedonistic" duplex scene comes complete with "great wines", a "professional" staff, "lotsa noise and commotion" and tabs that encourage "meals on the client"; in sum, this is everything a great steakhouse should be, and a quintessential NY experience in the bargain.

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CITÉ 22 20 21 $55
120 W. 51st St. (bet. 6th & 7th Aves.), 212-956-7100
"Hang with the suits" at this "classy" Midtowner where "top-notch steaks", "even better fries" and "free-flowing" vino makes for "evenings you won't forget – or perhaps can't remember"; insiders say it's best "when the company's picking up" the tab.

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THERE ARE OVER 35,000 RESTAURANTS IN THE ZAGAT GUIDES. WE'VE DONE A LITTLE EDITING FOR YOU.

MALONEY & PORCELLI 22 20 21 $56
37 E. 50th St. (bet. Madison & Park Aves.), 212-750-2233
Everything's "gigantic" at this East Side "power" chophouse renowned for its "monster martinis" and "juicy steaks" in "*Flintstones*-esque" portions – with beefy "prices to match"; perhaps it's the "high testosterone levels" at this handsome "he-man joint", but the ambiance is as "crackling" as the "signature" "to-die-for" pork shank.

NYC ZAGAT'S

MANHATTAN OCEAN CLUB 25 22 23 $62
57 W. 58th St. (bet. 5th & 6th Aves.), 212-371-7777
"Caught fish aspire" to land on the "impeccable" menu at this Midtowner that's "as reliable as a Rolex" (and almost as "pricey"); with "beyond compare" seafood that's "as fresh as the last tide", a "refined", modern setting and "pampering" service, this "aptly named" club is definitely worth joining.

NYC ZAGAT'S

PARK AVENUE CAFE 25 23 23 $60
100 E. 63rd St. (bet. Lexington & Park Aves.), 212-644-1900
"All American cooking goes Uptown" at this "top-rate" Eastsider where Neil Murphy's "clever" cooking is as much a "work of art" as the "folk art" decorating the room; ok, it's "tres-spendy", but from the "splendid bread basket to the opulent desserts", there are "no disappointments here."

NYC ZAGAT'S

POST HOUSE 23 20 22 $63
Lowell Hotel, 28 E. 63rd St. (bet. Madison & Park Aves.), 212-935-2888
"Divine bovine" feasts accompanied by first-rate wines transpire in the wood-paneled, Americana-filled surroundings of this East Side "classic steakhouse for the well-heeled", where the staff "waits on everyone hand and foot" and the beef's "magnificent"; it's a "clubby" "power scene", yet a lot more "female-friendly" than most meateries.

NYC ZAGAT'S

ONE C.P.S. 20 22 20 $58
Plaza Hotel, 1 Central Park S. (59th St. & 5t Ave.), 212-583-1111
A "shot in the arm for the Plaza", this "bright" New American brasserie is quite the "transformation" from its "previous incarnation", purveying "well-served, delicious" fare that harmonizes with the Central Park views and "modernized splendor" of Adam Tihany's redesign (don't worry, the mega-red "lampshades will grow on you"); granted, "it ain't cheap", but it sure "shows promise."

NYC ZAGAT'S

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VISA

F–Food, D–Decor, S–Service, C–Cost. All reviews taken from the Zagat New York City Restaurant Survey.

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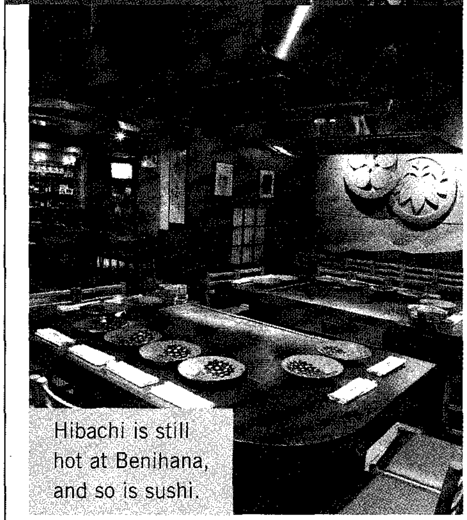
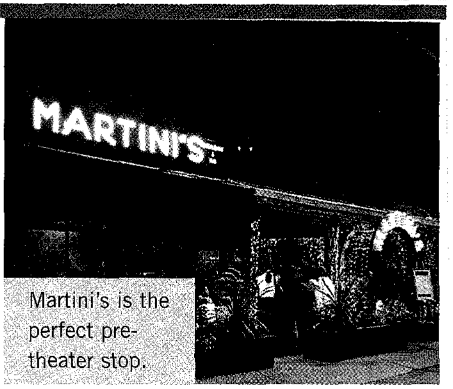


Hibachi is still hot at Benihana, and so is sushi.

Pre- or Post-Theater Picks

KNOWN FOR ITS THEATRICAL chefs and teppanyaki cooking on hibachi tables, **Benihana** (120 E. 56th St., 593-1627; 47 W. 56th St., 581-0930; www.benihana.com) promises grills that seat up to seven diners on three sides and serve the most delectable steak, chicken, and lobster. The restaurant also offers sushi, hand rolls, and sashimi, and is an ideal place to entertain the family or revel in a pre-theater knife-wielding show.



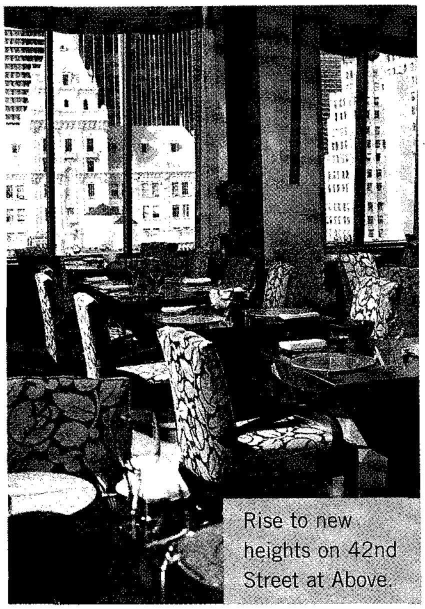
Martini's is the perfect pre-theater stop.

AT **MARTINI'S RESTAURANT & Bar** (810 Seventh Ave., 767-1717;www.rieserestaurants.com), you'll find an intriguing menu that's rustic Italian with a California twist. Nestled in the heart of the Theater District, you're ensured a casual, yet elegant pre- or post-theater dinner and, in Martini's year-round outdoor café—with its sparkling canopy of light—you'll find the perfect spot for al fresco dining. Be true to the restaurant's namesake and begin your meal with a martini, accented with a colossal olive.

Gabriel's continues to charm celebs and media moguls.

WHEN THE WEATHER WARMS, WHAT COULD BE BETTER THAN AFTER-WORK COCKTAILS AND CATCHING UP WITH A GROUP OF GOOD FRIENDS?

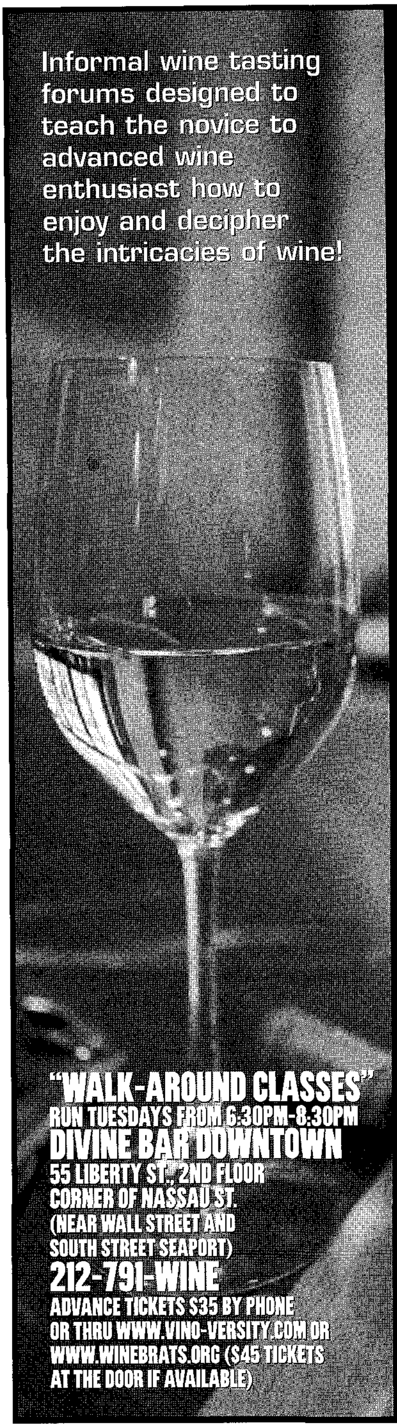
JUST STEPS FROM LINCOLN Center, **Gabriel's Bar & Restaurant** (11 W. 60th St., 956-4600; www.gabrielsbarandrest.com) has been beloved by today's hottest celebrities, the media elite, and regular New Yorkers since opening in 1991. Gabriel Aiello has created an oasis of dining pleasure that combines haute Northern Italian cuisine, a spacious and gracious setting, and intimate service. As an accent to the superb menu, Gabriel's serves an extensive array of fine wines as well as blueberry bellinis, a house specialty and a warm-weather must.


Rise to new heights on 42nd Street at Above.

AT A HEIGHT OF NEARLY 202 feet above 42nd Street, you'll find **Above** (the Hilton Times Square, 234 W. 42nd St., 21st floor, 642-2626), a restaurant that promises stellar northern views. It features outstanding Continental fare, as well as a Pinnacle Blue Martini that can't be beat. Sample such contemporary entrées as butter-poached Maine lobster with basil and sweet-pea risotto, and savor the fine wines. ●

International Flavors

AT **ST. ANDREWS** (120 W. 44th St., 840-8413; standrews-restaurant@citysearch.com), what might be New York's only full-fledged Scottish restaurant, the bartenders wear kilts, the Scotch is single-malt, and the décor revolves around pictures of famous golf courses. The hearty steak-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MAY 7TH
International Chardonnays
Learn about the vast differences in taste and style among 30 selections from California, France, South America, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the Pacific Northwest, and more. Breads and cheeses will be served!

MAY 21ST
Club Med: The Wines of The Mediterranean
Taste dozens of reds & whites from the fabulous wine regions of Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece while nibbling on assorted olives, dips, and cheeses.

JUNE 4TH
Big "BEEFY" Reds
Enjoy an array of Beef Hors D'Oeuvres paired with dozens of big, bold, spicy, "meaty" Cabernets, Merlots, Zinfandels, and more!

JUNE 18TH
A Tour of the White House
A chance to experience the amazing white grapes of the world such as Viognier, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Blanc, Gewurztraminer, Muscat, Semillon, Chenin Blanc and many others. Fruit & cheese will complement each taste!

JULY 2ND
The Wines of Spain
Taste dozens of world-class reds and whites from this amazing country! Little tapas hors d'oeuvres will transfer you right to España!

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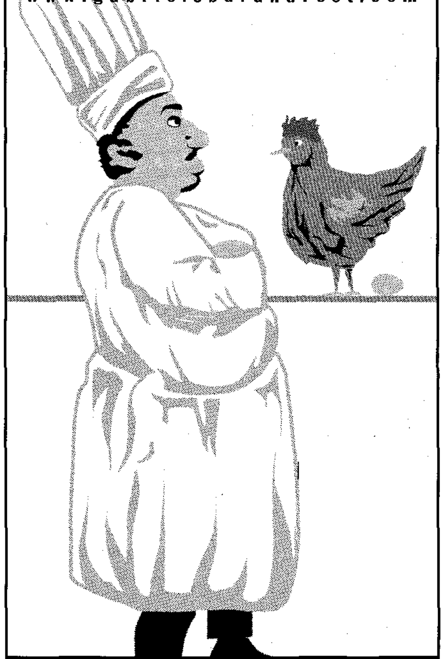
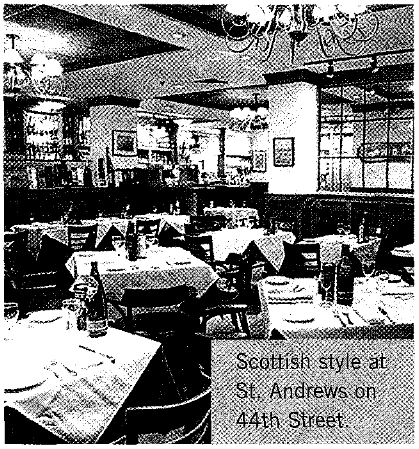


Winner of Wine Spectator
Award of Excellence '97, '98, '99, '00
"The service is charming, the food is appealing, run by real people." Ruth Reichl, NY Times

NEW YORK RESTAURANT AND BAR GUIDE

WHEN IT COMES TO COCKTAIL HOUR, SIMPLY CHOOSE YOUR POISON. WHET YOUR WHISTLE WITH A TASTY PLUM BLOSSOM SAKETINI, A GREEN DRAGON, A DRY MARTINI, OR A CHILLED CHABLIS.

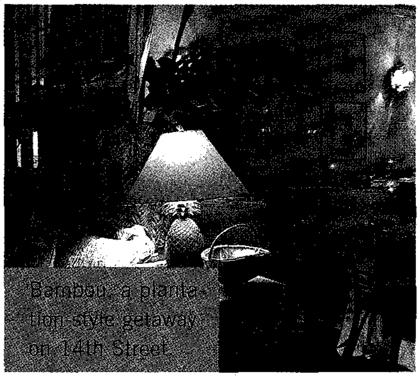
and-seafood menu features rack of lamb and brook trout stuffed with crabmeat and Irish oatmeal in a Scotch-whisky sauce.



Scottish style at St. Andrews on 44th Street.

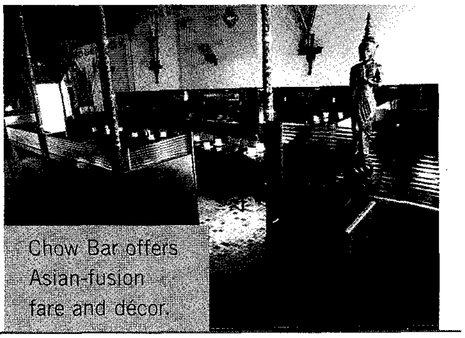
CHOW BAR (230 W. FOURTH St., 633-2212) is an Asian-fusion restaurant decorated with cozy lanterns, candles, and a poem painted in Chinese calligraphy, which trims the walls. Try such delicacies as crispy duck and crab spring rolls, sip the house-special drink, a Green Dragon, or enjoy a Plum Blossom – a tasty Saketini.

YOU'LL FEEL LIKE YOU stepped into a plantation-style house at **Bambou** (243 E. 14th St., 358-0012). With its exotic tropical feel, comfy couches, bamboo trees, and sizable bar and lounge up front, Bambou is the perfect place to relax over a rum drink and plate of jerk chicken or Bambou's Bouillabaise Caraibe (seafood soup with scallops, mussels, clams, lobster, shrimp, and fish-of-the-day) in a light broth.



Bambou, a plantation-style getaway on 14th Street

FOR AN AUTHENTIC JAPANESE meal, head to **Omen** (113 Thompson St., 925-8923). Here, you can opt for a five-course prix fixe menu (either a Japanese steak dinner, sashimi, tempura, or dinner of the season) served in this



Chow Bar offers Asian-fusion fare and décor.

homey restaurant, opened in 1982. With sister restaurants in Kyoto and Kobe, you're getting the real deal as well as a calm ambience, good food, and a meal that ends with red-bean or green-tea ice cream.

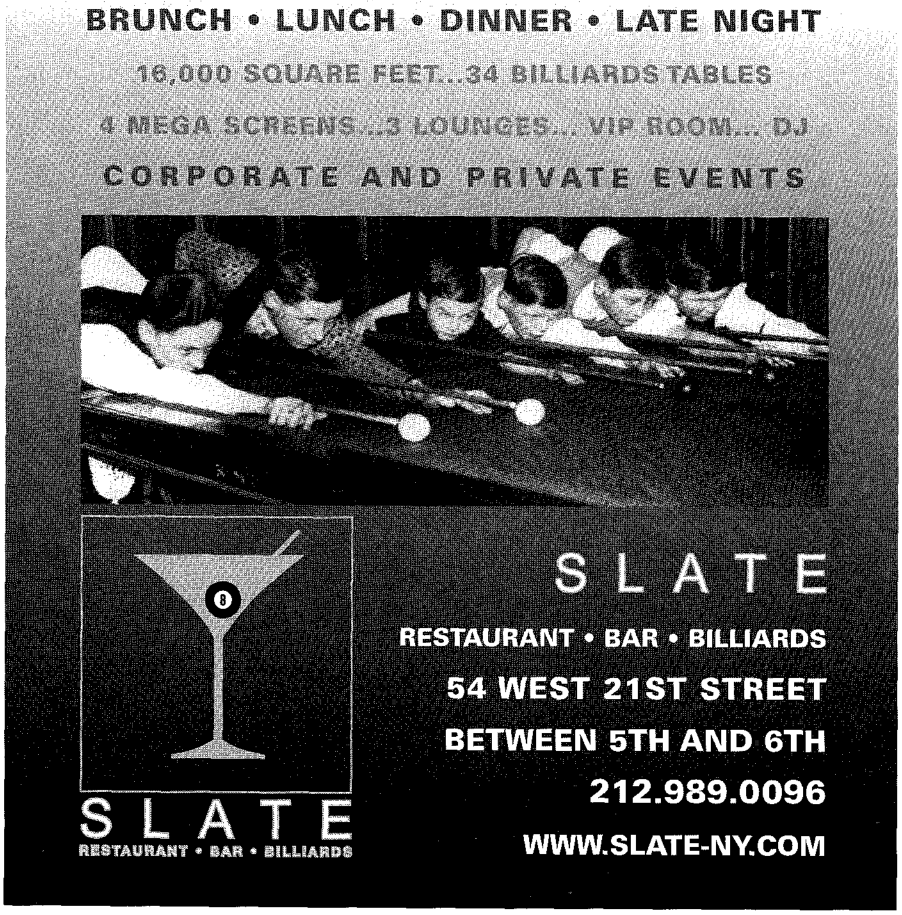
Festive Tio Pepe is a party waiting to happen.

TIO PEPE (168 W. FOURTH ST., 242-9338; www.tiopepenyc.com) is a Spanish-Mexican restaurant that has delighted diners with Plato Iberico (manchego cheese, Spanish ham, and chorizo), Gambas Ixtapa (shrimp chipotle), and 40 different tequilas since it opened in 1970. The atmosphere here is light, festive, and cheery, whether you're sitting in the main dining room or out back in the romantic skylit garden. ●

Old-World Italian Charm

YOU'LL FEEL LIKE YOU'VE arrived in Northern Italy at **Nino's** (1354 First Ave., 988-0002; www.ninosnyc.com), with its blue-hued tiled floors and formal tapestries. At Nino's Positano (890 Second Ave., 355-5540; www.ninospositano.com) in mid-

At Nino's, a warm greeting is on the menu.



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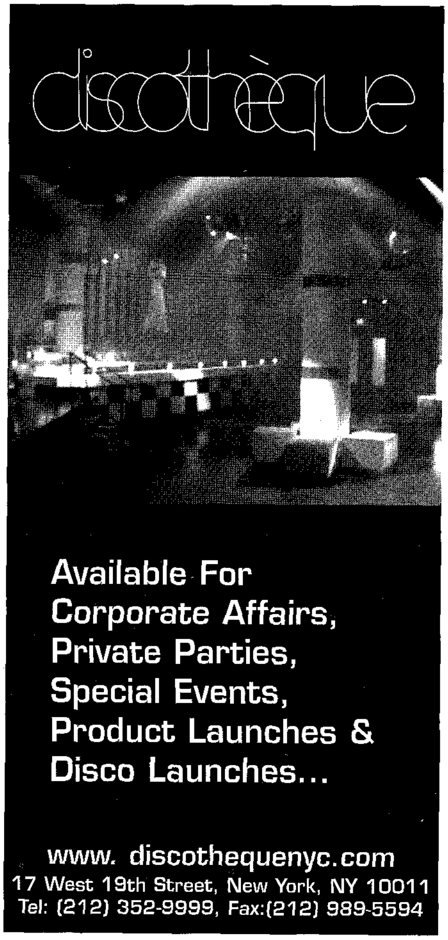

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Martini's Restaurant offers patio dining under a canopy of lights nestled in the very heart of the Theater District. Savor rustic Italian cuisine with a California twist created by celebrated chef Richard Krause.

Martini's extensive menu is the civilized way to begin your theater evening or the best place for your curtain call–with prices so fair they deserve a standing ovation.

Casual dining in the heart of the theater district.

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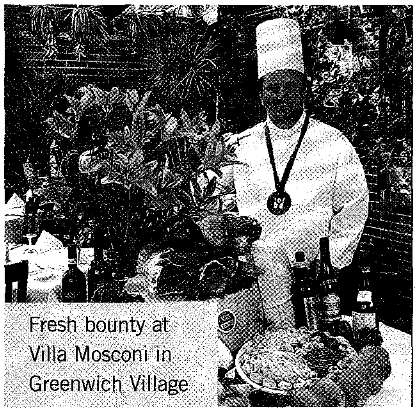
NEW YORK RESTAURANT AND BAR GUIDE

town, the siena-textured walls and fresco murals help family and friends feel that they have traveled to Positano without crossing the ocean. For parties, the midtown locale accommodates up to 100, and Nino's uptown is great for parties from 15 to 150, with complimentary valet parking. The much-loved Lobster Fra Diavolo is considered a must at either location, but menus are custom-tailored to your event.

HOMEY **VILLA MOSCONI** (69 MacDougal St., 673-0390 or 674-0320; www.villamosconi.homestead.com) is an old-world Italian restaurant in the heart of Greenwich Village. For 26 years, the owner has shopped the Fulton Fish Market for the freshest seafood, and guarantees that the pasta is made on the premises daily. Some say veal is the star dish, but the fresh four-cheese tortellini with Swiss chard, nutmeg, and fresh ground pepper is a close second. The glass-roofed garden is lovely year-round and is wonderful for parties of up to 40. The private room accommodates 50 diners. ●



Fresh bounty at Villa Mosconi in Greenwich Village

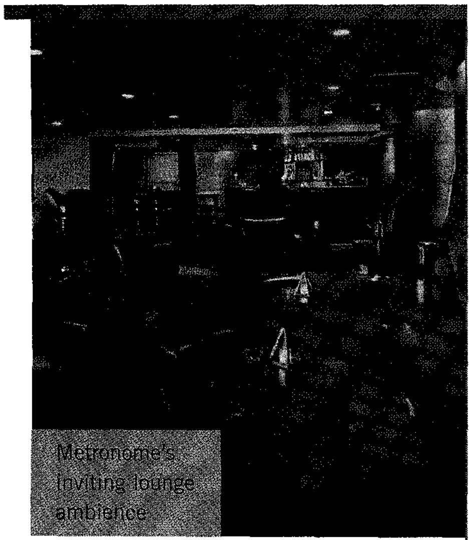
Lounge Acts

IN THE HEART OF THE Garment District, **Radius** (111 W. 38th St., 869-1818; www.radiusnyc.com), a high-fashion restaurant, finally arrives in this neighborhood. A Euro-style circular steel conveyor belt delivers "sushi, dim sum, and then some" Wednesday through Friday. Enjoy lunch (at less than $20), dine over candlelight, or jam to hot DJ tunes every Thursday. Lounge at the circular bar with mellow music and soft lighting, featuring outstanding pizzas, coconut shrimp, and appletinis.

AT HIP **METRONOME** (915 Broadway; 505-7400; www.metronomenyc.com), warm lighting, velvet couches, and live jazz

High-fashion clients meet fab fare at Radius.

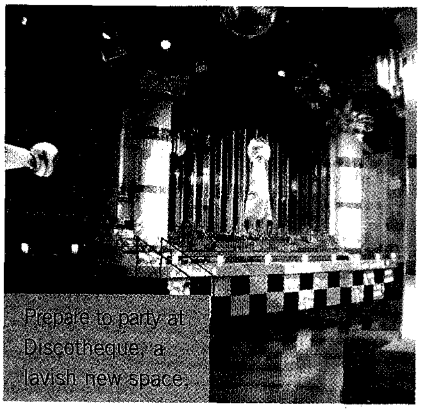
IF TONIGHT'S DINNER PLANS INVOLVE A TAKEOUT MENU, NOW'S THE TIME TO REGROUP. START WITH RESERVATIONS—FOR TWO—AT A HOT NEW RESTAURANT.



Metronome's inviting lounge ambience

await as you sip a Metronome cocktail (a blend of Absolut Kurant, Grand Marnier®, fresh lime, and a cranberry splash) and relax in the sophisticated Art Deco interior of this legendary gathering place that's as perfect for a date as it is for a get-together with friends.

GET READY TO DANCE TO the latest tunes mixed by world-renowned DJs at **Discotheque** (17 W. 19th St., 352-9999; www.discothequenyc.com). At Discotheque, the pulsing nightlife of New York promises to get a megadose of the class and glamour of the clubs of yesteryear, with the most up-to-the-minute technology, including an Auroteq sound system pumping out tunes in the club's lavish open space. You can also order from a luxe cocktail menu, and order bottle service at reasonable prices. ●



Prepare to party at Discotheque, a lavish new space

Dinner and Fun

NO PRIVATE PARTY IS TOO BIG for **Slate** (54 W. 21st St., 989-0096; www.slate-ny.com), the sleek billiards hall with elegant eats and catchy tunes in the heart of Chelsea. With

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The Best American Food in the U.S. of A.

Thank God for BEN BENSON'S. This unassuming 20-year-old midtown-Manhattan steakhouse might just serve the greatest American meals in the U.S.A. Here's why:

1. As opposed to even the most admirable steak-house chains, BB's is one unit, owned by the man whose name is on the awning.
2. The beef is USDA Prime from the highest end of a much abused grade.
3. BB's menu has range: fabulous shrimp, terrific salads, great soup, superb fish, massive stone crabs.
4. The kitchen doesn't make mistakes. There's no overpaid celebrity chef back there, just heat-hardened pros who know how to work an 800-degree grill.
5. The wine list abounds with perfectly suited American cabernets and chardonnays. Who the hell needs gewürztraminer and viognier with a menu like BB's?
6. There are no puny one- and two-pound lobsters here. They start at three and go up from there: five, seven, sometimes ten.
7. The waiters are amiable and can shell those big lobsters in less than 40 seconds.
8. You can spot America's best red-meat-loving jocks.
9. The outdoor patio lets you ogle New York women as they stroll by.
10. The leakproof doggie bags, which sport a picture of BB's mascot, Rocky the bulldog. –JOHN MARIANI

Ben Benson's STEAK HOUSE

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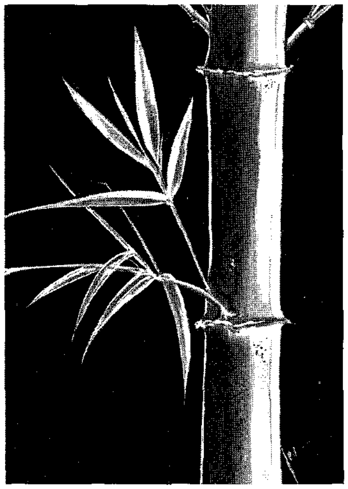

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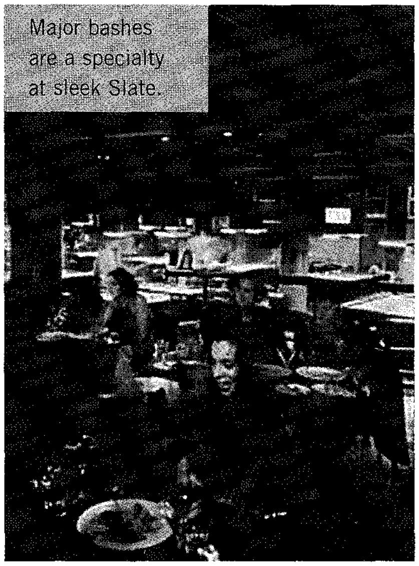
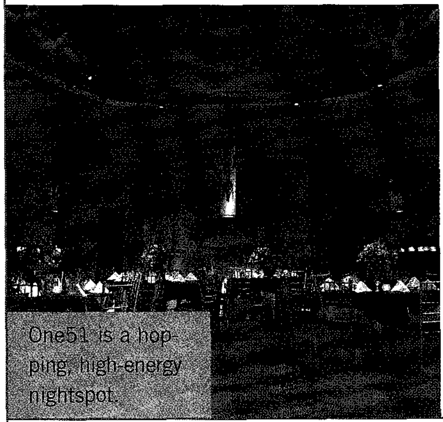
NEW YORK RESTAURANT AND BAR GUIDE



Major bashes are a specialty at sleek Slate.

34 pool tables on two levels and a smashing 54-foot bar that can seat 100, Slate (named for the ultra-smooth stone that lies beneath a pool table's green felt) is a dramatic remake of the former Chelsea Bar & Billiards. You'll enjoy the regional-American cuisine of executive chef Oscar Galindo and consulting chef Stephen Kalt, which includes Baja fish tacos, Lollipop Wings, New Mexico steak fingers, tuna nicoise sandwiches, po' boys, and fried calamari salad. The best part is that you can be served anywhere—in the lounges, at slate tables in the dining area, at the bar, or at raised chrome tables "pool-side."

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A nightclub that's always hopping, you'll find it at **One51** (151 E. 50th St., 753-1144; www.one51.com) where the energy is maintained by the club's world-class DJs, who spin house, techno, hip-hop, reggae and Latin music. You may even spot a celebrity (or two) out there on the dance floor with you. Besides after-dinner music that will keep you dancing for hours, indulge in tapas, an a la carte or prix fixe menu. Whatever you choose, whether it's a scallion and ginger marinated grilled shrimp appetizer or a grilled filet mignon over portobello mushrooms, you'll love what Christopher Enright, executive chef, prepares for you. ●



One51 is a hopping, high-energy nightspot.

DEADLINES, CREDIT-CARD PAYMENTS, A SURLY BOSS? TOSS ASIDE YOUR TROUBLES FOR A FEW HOURS AND RELAX.

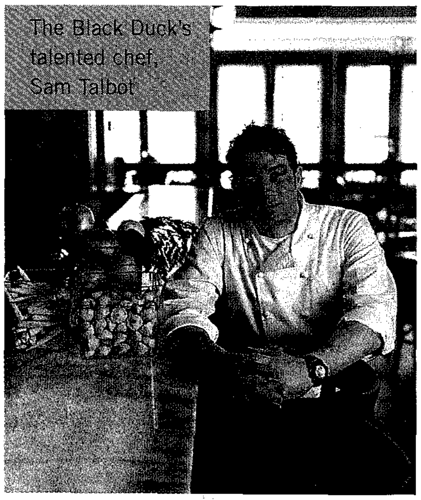
All About the Seafood

BARELY TWO YEARS OLD, **AVRA** (141 E. 48th St., 759-8550; www.avrany.com) is already a magnet for neighborhood publishing, financing, and advertising execs who come to power-lunch and lap up the zest of this seafood specialist which swims with Greek-seaside charm. Book a table and savor the Greek-Mediterranean house specialties, such as whole fish (loup de mer, artic char), grilled octopus, steaks and chops, and lobster ravioli. The mood is festive, and the décor bright; pastel-shaded

Mediterranean. At sister restaurant Trata (1331 Second Ave., 535-3800; www.tratany.com), a lively seafood restaurant uptown, a case of fresh seafood awaits—just tell the cooks how you want it prepared.

Authentic Mediterranean fare is Avra's specialty.

NAMED FOR A 1920'S RUM-running boat at sea during the Prohibition Era, the **Black Duck** (Park South Hotel, 122 E. 28th St., 204-5240) is housed in a turn-of-the-century brownstone in the Park South Hotel and features hardwood floors, an alabaster bar, and vintage artwork. Chef Sam Talbot prepares such mouth-watering appetizers as rock shrimp crab cake, as well as entrées that include sesame seared tuna. You'll find plenty of non-seafood favorites here, too. After dinner, linger over drinks in the restaurant's intimate lounge.



The Black Duck's talented chef, Sam Talbot

YOU'LL FIND FISH AND seafood served in two luxurious and colorful dining rooms at **Lure** (33 E. 60th St., 319-3800; www.lur-

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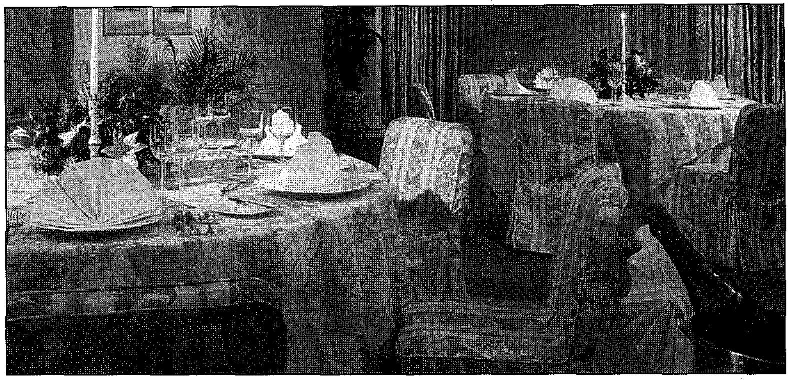

You've dreamed of the perfect setting for your affair. The Upper East Side, of course. A place where elegance isn't ordinary. And exclusiveness is never pretentious. A place where guests have individual menus prepared with the attentiveness of the finest restaurant, and service is in an unobtrusive manner. A place that feels more expensive than it really is. A place that's called The Mark.

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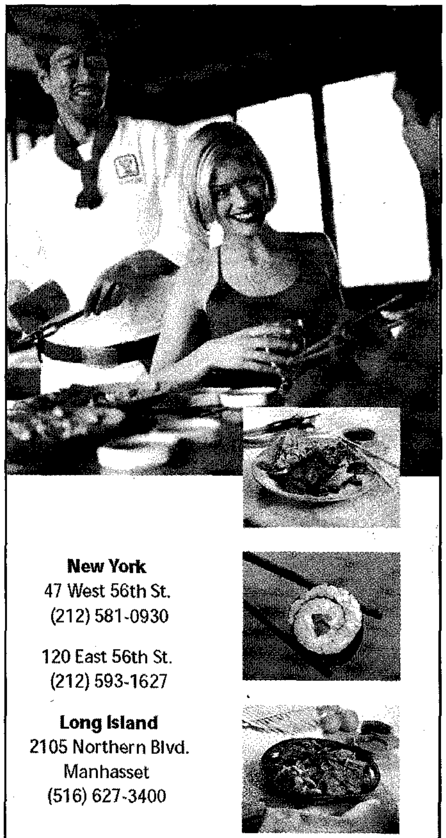

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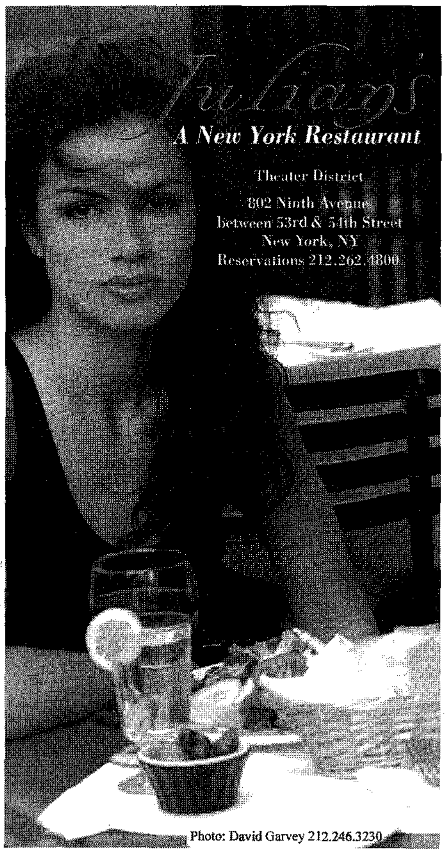

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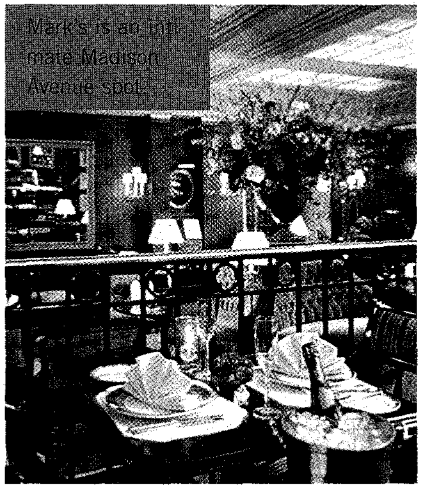
Fresh fish in and hip cocktails are the big Lure.

erestaurant.com). This spinoff of Lure at The Independent in Bridgehampton, promises mouth-watering Alaskan king salmon and Northeast tuna as well as velvet lobster and squash bisque, and some of the best calamari in town. On Mondays, martinis are $5 so be sure to try the house specialty, the Lure-tini, made of Absolut Citron, Blue Curacao, fresh lime, Triplesec, and pineapple juice. With bamboo floors and textured glass reminiscent of the ocean, you'll love kicking back in Lure's two bars and lounges as well. ●

Quiet Elegance

ELEGANCE AND GRANDEUR await at the Upper East Side's Mark Hotel. Tucked away here is the intimate and clubby **Mark's** (25 E. 77th St. at Madison Avenue, 879-1864; www.mandarinoriental.com/themark), a fashionable spot to dine on French-American food with such Mediterranean influences like Moroccan-crusted salmon with quinoa, prepared by Andrew Chase, executive chef, back in the kitchen after a decade. Every two weeks there are wine classes and wine feasts with master sommelier Richard Dean. Under the supervision of



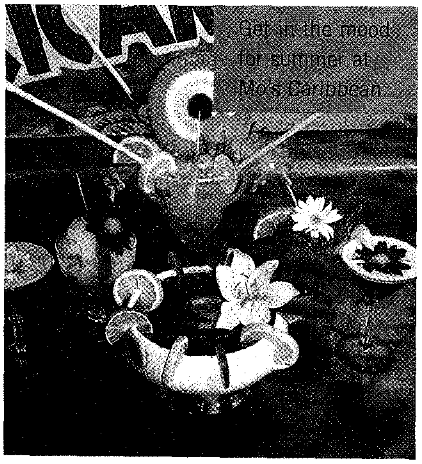
Mark's is an intimate Madison Avenue spot.

WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA? BRUNCH, GOSSIP, OR DISHING ABOUT A ROMANCE GONE AWRY? THERE'S A RESTAURANT OR WATERING HOLE HERE TO SUIT EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE OR OCCASION.

Ringo Lo, Mark's will serve some of the most aromatic Chinese teas, complete with assorted Chinese-style pastries. A tarot-card reader will be present for your enjoyment. Make yourself comfortable at Mark's with the no-jacket, no-tie, no-attitude atmosphere. ●

Party Down

START YOUR TROPICAL getaway at **Mo's Caribbean Bar & Mexican Grill** (1454 Second Ave., 650-0561; www.nycbestbars.com), the Upper East Side's vacation spot. Combine the Caribbean beach with a summertime fiesta carnival and you have one high-energy nightspot. Order The Volcano or any one of over 25 fabulous flavors of Margaritas. Munch on Mexican specialties like fajitas, enchiladas, tacos, and Caribbean-inspired Cuban curried chicken or Jamaican jerk chicken. Stop in on Tuesday's for Reggae Night with a rollicking live band from 8 p.m. to midnight. ●


Get in the mood for summer at Mo's Caribbean

Good Eats

BUTTER (415 LAFAYETTE ST., 253-2828) is a brand-new restaurant offering simple and focused food, including executive chef Keith Harry's interpretations of such classic dishes as gratin of salted cod with tomato and potato, and stuffed gnocchi with a truffled-mushroom filling. Guests can either dine in The Chef's Tasting Gallery, an arched promenade leading to the dining room, with dark leather banquettes, The Dining Room, a grand space under 20-foot-high vaults with a vast photographic mural, or The Birch Room, a relaxed space for casual dining with booths upholstered in blue denim.

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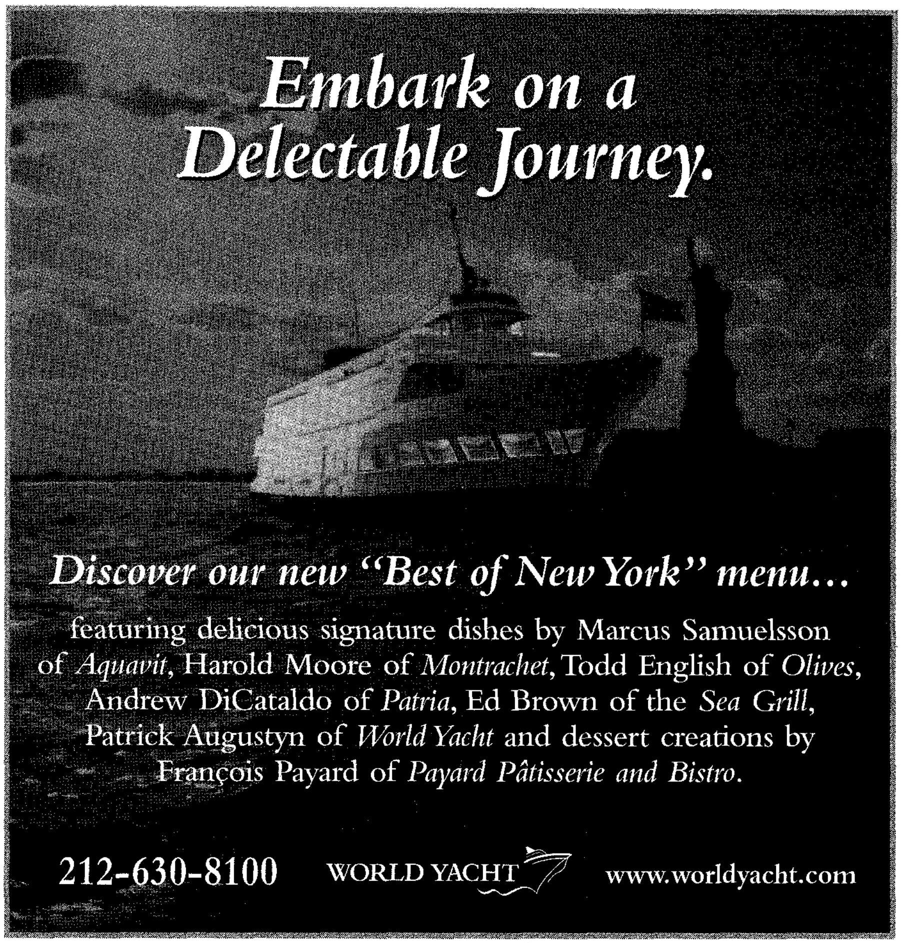

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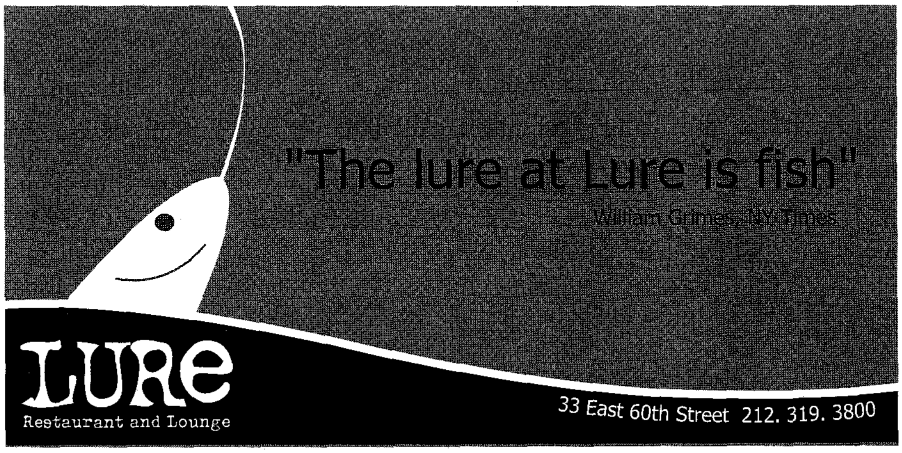

"The lure at Lure is fish"
William Grimes, NY Times

LURE
Restaurant and Lounge

33 East 60th Street 212. 319. 3800

NEW YORK RESTAURANT AND BAR GUIDE

A neighborhood favorite, Julian's hits the mark.

FOR A MEAL AT A ROMANTIC favorite, head to **Julian's** (802 Ninth Ave., 262-4800; www. juliansny.citysearch.com). Dine in the softly lit, rose-hued dining room, outdoor café, or enclosed garden. Head here for weekend brunch or for an evening treat where you'll find tender grilled lamb chops, veal, chicken, and braised snapper as well as pastas, risotto, and mouth-watering desserts. Julian's is also open for lunch.

T**HE POD** IS A GLAMOROUS newcomer to Williamsburg (141 N. Seventh St., between Bedford and Berry streets, 718-302-3754). It is a floating luminous lime-green capsule creating an intimate dining area, offering French cuisine with Asian and New Mexican influences. Try the honey-tortilla Napoleon for dessert. The plush funky-orange lower lounge is a perfect place to drink your choice of $5 martinis. Enjoy live jazz Thursday night and Sunday or, on weekends, kick back at The Pod for the $12.99 all-you-can-drink brunch. ●

The Pod is a glam addition to Williamsburg.

Movies

Edited by Ben Kaplan

NEW THIS WEEK

Circuit
A naïve gay ex-cop (Jonathan Wade Drahos) relocates to Los Angeles and gets caught up in the drug-fueled party circuit. Drahos has genuine presence, which carries the plot for a while, but the overlong film seems more interested in showing off bodies than telling a story, succumbing to the very superficiality it seeks to admonish. (2 hrs. 10 mins.; NR) • Opens 4/26.

Dogtown and Z-Boys
An energetic, elegiac documentary about the influential crew of teens in early-seventies California who turned skateboarding into today's fashionable, free-wheeling, daredevil sport. Directed by Stacy Peralta, a member of the original Z-Boys, and full of great archival footage, it's a riveting inside look at a huge youth-culture momentum shift. (See box.) (1 hr. 30 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 4/26.

Facing the Music
Observant and unflinching documentary follows the developing tensions at the University of Sydney's music department, as faculty members, particularly department chair (and respected Aussie composer) Anne Boyd, struggle against drastic budget cuts while trying to hang on to the idealism of their profession. Directed by Bob Connolly and Robin Anderson. (1 hr. 29 mins.; NR) • Opens 4/24.

Jason X
The tenth *Friday the 13th* installment is set in the future, where archaeology students unthaw Jason, the hockey-masked murderer, and unleash him on earthlings, who now live (and die) in outer space. (1 hr. 33 mins.; R) • Opens 4/26.

Life, or Something Like It
A romantic comedy starring Edward Burns as a nonchalant cameraman and Angelina Jolie as a career-minded journalist who changes after being told that she only has a week to live. Directed by *Rock Star*'s Stephen Herek. (See box.) (1 hr. 43 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 4/26.

Night at the Golden Eagle
An elderly, unreformed tough guy (Donnie Montemarano) and his now-clean partner (Vinnie Argiro) land in a grubby motel peopled by strung-out hookers and other assorted castoffs, with disastrous consequences. So sleazy you can smell it; the grimy, bleak portrait of dead-end lives is often gripping, but the contrived storyline feels out of place. (1 hr. 27 mins.; R) • Opens 4/26.

Rain
Atmospheric portrait of a young New Zealand teen (Alicia Fulford-Wierzbicki) discovering her budding sexuality during a beach idyll with her family, and her attraction to a photographer who is also coveted by her mom (Sarah Peirse). Elliptical and moody, it's a triumph of style over narrative, despite some melodramatic twists. (1 hr. 32 mins.; NR) • Opens 4/26.

Sade
Imprisoned during the Revolution, a reflective Marquis de Sade (Daniel Auteuil) sets eyes on a young innocent (Isild Le Besco) while contemplating the nature of love and freedom. Director Benoît Jacquot (*The School of Flesh*) supplies his trademark intellectual intimacy, but the show belongs to Auteuil, whose face alone can act circles around most other leading men. (1 hr. 34 mins.; NR) • Opens 4/26.

CIRCUS FREAK: Brian O'Halloran in *Vulgar*.

Some Body
L.A. schoolteacher (co-writer Stephanie Bennett) drops her longtime boyfriend (Jeramy Guillory) in search of more excitement, and soon learns that the single life can be a dangerous, heart-rending business. Low-budget vérité feature has stylistic immediacy to it, but ultimately fails to say much that is original. (1 hr. 17 mins.; NR) • Opens 4/26.

Vulgar
Vulgar (played by Brian O'Halloran) is the new identity of a down-on-his-luck clown who transforms himself from a browbeaten jester into a pistol-toting star. Written and directed by Bryan Johnson; produced by and co-starring *Clerks*'s Kevin Smith. (1 hr. 37 mins.; R) • Opens 4/26.

REVIEWS BY BILGE EBIRI

Now Playing

All About the Benjamins
Good comic chemistry as a bounty hunter (Ice Cube) and his nemesis pursue a group of diamond smugglers. (1 hr. 39 mins.; R) • 17; 39; 51.

★ Amadeus: Director's Cut
An expanded version of Milos Forman's Oscar-winning 1984 masterpiece about the life of Mozart (Tom Hulce) seen through the eyes of rival Antonio Salieri (F. Murray Abraham). (3 hrs. 8 mins.; R) • 8; 11; 42.

★ Amélie
Treacle this elaborately inventive deserves some kind of blue ribbon. (Rainer; 11/12/01) (2 hrs.; R) • 1; 11; 17.

Astoria
Queens is the setting of Nick Efteriades's formulaic Greek-American coming-of-age tale. (1 hr. 43 mins.; R) • 61.

A Beautiful Mind
Russell Crowe plays John Nash in this rather conventionalized view of madness and creativity. Ron Howard directed. (Rainer; 1/7/02) (2 hrs. 9 mins.; PG-13) • 16; 17; 28; 42; 69.

Big Trouble
Barry Sonnenfeld's frantic farce set in Miami is big on dither and short on laughs. With Tim Allen, Stanley Tucci, Dennis Farina, and Rene Russo. (Rainer; 4/15/02) (1 hr. 25 mins.; PG-13) • 17.

★ Blade 2
Director Guillermo Del Toro takes Wesley Snipes's techno-vampire franchise and transforms it into an exuberantly hard-boiled gothic ninja monster fantasy. (1 hr. 36 mins.; R) • 10; 15; 16; 21; 31; 38; 39; 43; 44; 49; 51; 56; 59; 61; 67; 69; 72; 74.

Caesar's Park
Documentarian Sarah Price (*American Movie*) trains the camera on her new suburban-Milwaukee neighborhood's characters. (1 hr. 7 mins.; NR) • 9.

The Cat's Meow
Director Peter Bogdanovich vividly reimagines the fateful 1924 celebrity cruise aboard news tycoon William Randolph Hearst's yacht. The excursion resulted in a mysterious death, implicating everybody from Charlie Chaplin (Eddie Izzard) to actress Marion Davies (Kirsten Dunst) and filmmaker Thomas Ince (Cary Elwes). (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) • 1; 33; 42.

Changing Lanes
Pulpy and preposterous, but enjoyable. Ben Affleck and Samuel Jackson play two men who collide their cars on the FDR and then engage in a dangerously escalating game of shot-for-shot. (Rainer; 4/22/02) (1 hr. 39 mins.; R) • 6; 14; 15; 16; 21; 24; 31; 35; 39; 40; 41; 42; 43; 44; 48; 49; 50; 51; 52; 53; 56; 57; 59; 60; 61; 63; 65; 68; 69; 70; 71; 72; 73; 74.

Chelsea Walls
Convoluted, grating multicharacter study of various bohemian types in the Chelsea Hotel, from a hard-edged writer (Kris Kristofferson) to a struggling painter (Vincent D'Onofrio). Ethan Hawke's directorial debut. (1 hr. 49 mins.; R) • 6; 12.

Clockstoppers
A scientist's teenage son (Jesse Bradford) winds up with a top-secret watch that gives him superhuman speed. Kids may enjoy this throwback to Disney live-action flicks, but adults will be distracted by extra-wide plot holes. (1 hr. 34 mins.; PG) • 16; 17; 42; 43; 44; 49; 51; 52; 55; 58; 59; 61; 65; 67; 71; 72.

Crush
Melodrama about the friendship of three single fortysomething women, which gets tested when one (Andie MacDowell) begins a fling with a younger man (Kenny Doughty). (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) • 2; 17.

Death to Smoochy
Danny DeVito's shrill, over-the-top comedy is about a psychotic children's-show personality (Robin Williams) who does all he can to bring down his replacement, an angelic hippie (Edward Norton) dressed as a rhino. (1 hr. 48 mins.; R) • 6; 17.

E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial
Well, it's certainly still good. Steven Spielberg's tale of a boy (Henry Thomas) and a homesick alien punches all the right buttons; the additional footage feels somewhat extraneous, but at least there isn't much of it. (2 hrs.; PG) • 17; 58; 59; 63.

Enigma
A dry, occasionally smart drama about British code-breakers during WWII. Dougray Scott plays a big-brain codebreaker and Kate Winslet is his helpmate. Michael Apted directed, from a script by Tom Stoppard. (Rainer; 2/29/02) (1 hr. 59 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 14; 17; 18; 42; 52; 58.

Festival in Cannes
Talkfest auteur Henry Jaglom's vague story shot on the fly at the 2000 Cannes film festival about an actress turned director (Greta Scacchi) and a wannabe producer trying to finance a film. (1 hr. 39 mins.; PG-13) • 2.

★ Frailty
Bill Paxton directed and stars in this creepy, disturbing low-budget triumph that is part psychological drama and part Old Testament–Stephen King–Freud–Brothers Grimm scarefest. He plays a widower with two

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Ground Rules These synopses, where noted, are condensed versions of reviews by Peter Rainer. Stars (★) denote releases that *New York* recommends, ranging from best-of-the-year picks to worthy curios to flawed movies with one outstanding element. **NOTE: Each review is followed by numbers indicating theaters where the film is playing; a key to theaters begins on page 76.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY DORIS LUSITANA.

young boys who believes he has been told by an angel to rid the world of demons. (Rainer; 4/15/02) (1 hr. 40 mins.; R) • 10; 12; 15; 16; 21; 26; 38; 39; 40; 41; 44; 47; 49; 51; 54; 55; 57; 58; 61; 63; 67; 71; 72; 74.

★ Girls Can't Swim
Sharply observed, delicately acted portrait of teenage friends coping with sex, love, and loss one summer on the coast of France. (1 hr. 41 mins.; NR) • 7.

★ Gosford Park
Robert Altman's murder mystery is an artful blend of whodunit and something deeper—a meditation on class and a vanishing gentry. (Rainer; 12/24/01) (2 hrs. 17 mins.; R) • 10; 24; 42.

High Crimes
Morgan Freeman has a juicy good time playing an alcoholic lawyer who redeems himself in this otherwise smoothly directed (by Carl Franklin) but rather pro forma courtroom thriller co-starring Ashley Judd and Jim Caviezel. (Rainer; 4/15/02) (1 hr. 55 mins.; PG-13) • 10; 11; 12; 17; 20; 26; 28; 39; 44; 49; 51; 53; 56; 61; 63; 67; 69; 70; 71; 72; 74.

Human Nature
Michel Gondry directs Charlie (*Being John Malkovich*) Kaufman's script about a behaviorist prude (Tim Robbins), a feral stud (Rhys Ifans), and a hairy naturalist author (Patricia Arquette). (1 hr. 36 mins.; R) • 10; 13; 17; 37; 52; 58.

★ Ice Age
Marvelously funny digitally animated comedy. (Rainer; 3/25/02) (1 hr. 15 mins.; PG) • 10; 17; 29; 33; 39; 43; 44; 49; 51; 52; 54; 55; 57; 59; 61; 63; 68; 69; 70; 72; 73; 74.

★ In the Bedroom
Todd Field, in his directorial debut, has made a fine, straightforward film about a murdered son and the parents who slowly writhe for retribution. (Rainer; 11/26/01) (1 hr. 46 mins.; R) • 2.

Iris
Judi Dench and Jim Broadbent are Iris Murdoch and John Bayley in Richard Eyre's overly fussy movie about the famous English literary couple and Murdoch's descent into Alzheimer's. (Rainer; 12/10/01) (1 hr. 33 mins.; R) • 8; 11; 64.

Italian for Beginners
Lone Scherfig's film is set at a community-center class, which becomes the social nexus for six Copenhagen thirtysomething singles. (1 hr. 40 mins.; R) • 2.

John Q
Denzel Washington plays a factory worker whose insurance doesn't cover a heart transplant for his boy. So he holds hostage a hospital emergency room. Howlingly bad. (Rainer; 2/25/02) (1 hr. 58 mins.; PG-13) • 17; 64.

Karmen Geï
An African version of *Carmen,* with Karmen (Djeïnaba Diop Gaï) as an inmate at a women's prison. Full of throbbing drums and churning dancers, the film embraces its own theatricality, but the results still feel too distant. (1 hr. 24 mins.; NR) • 4.

★ Kissing Jessica Stein
Jennifer Westfeldt and Heather Juergensen co-wrote and star in this entertainingly sitcomish New York romance about two women who meet through the personals. (Rainer; 3/25/02) (1 hr. 36 mins.; R) • 5; 12; 17; 28; 32; 34; 62; 74.

Lantana
Anthony LaPaglia plays a Sydney police detective whose search for a missing psychiatrist intersects with four unhappily married couples—including him and his wife. With Geoffrey Rush. (2 hrs.; R) • 7; 48.

★ The Last Waltz
Martin Scorsese's documentary of the Band's final concert performance is perhaps the greatest rock documentary of all time, here enhanced by a digital remix. (Rainer; 4/22/02) (1 hr. 59 mins.; NR) • 10.

★ Les Destinées
Olivier Assayas's film about a porcelain-factory heir (Charles Berling) and his second wife (Emmanuelle Béart) as they struggle through the upheavals of the twentieth century. Once the sprawling story gets going, Berling's and Béart's performances make for a genuinely intimate epic. (3 hrs.; NR) • 3; 37.

★ The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring
For most of the way, Peter Jackson's film is powerfully imaginative. (Rainer; 12/25/01) (2 hrs. 40 mins.; PG-13) • 10; 74.

Lucky Break
Two small-time British hoodlums (James Nesbitt and Lennie James) land behind bars, then plot their escape using a musical performance as a cover. *Full Monty* director Peter Cattaneo's film is desperate to please everybody, and falters as a result. (1 hr. 49 mins.; PG-13) • 17.

★ Monsoon Wedding
Mira Nair's giddy movie about the preparations for an arranged marriage in New Delhi is an entertaining pastiche of Bombay movie-musical nuttiness and *Father of the Bride*. (Rainer; 3/4/02) (1 hr. 53 mins.; R) • 5; 15; 25; 45; 48; 62; 74.

Monster's Ball
See what the fuss is about: Halle Berry plays the wife of a man who Billy Bob Thornton's death-row prison guard executes, and they wind up in a depth-charged affair. (Rainer; 1/14/02) (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) • 2; 14; 17; 30; 45; 64.

Mule Skinner Blues
A bizarre, rambling documentary about a bunch of Florida trailer-park denizens who get together to make a cheapo horror flick. (1 hr. 33 mins.; NR) • 3.

Murder by Numbers
An efficient but by-the-numbers crime thriller starring Sandra Bullock as a hardened homicide detective on the trail of two high-school killers (Ryan Gosling and Michael Pitt). Barbet Schroeder directed, and he's better than his material. (Rainer; 4/29/02) (1 hr. 58 mins.; R) • 10; 12; 13; 15; 16; 17; 18; 31; 42; 43; 44; 46; 49; 50; 51; 52; 54; 56; 57; 59; 60; 61; 63; 66; 68; 70; 71; 72; 73; 74.

Murderous Maids
Jean-Pierre Denis's account of the two chambermaids who kill their bourgeois employers in 1933 France. (1 hr. 34 mins.; NR) • 7; 37.

Mutant Aliens
Animation giant Bill Plympton's film is about astronauts and aliens who unite against a greedy corporate space baron. (1 hr. 23 mins.; NR) • 3.

Opening

Hair Apparent

No, that's not Farrah Fawcett. Angelina Jolie (pictured) has just borrowed her golden locks for Stephen Herek's **Life, or Something Like It**, in which she finds that she has—according to a homeless psychic—one week to live. Edward Burns plays the love interest with whom she quarrels until she discovers that there's something charming and, yes, even inspiring, about his free spirit. You won't need ESP to determine the outcome: It's certainly more predictable than Ms. Fawcett's talk-show appearances. Opens April 26.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding
Innocuous comedy about Toula, who is getting too old to marry, at least by her Greek family's standards. When a decidedly un-Greek Mr. Right (John Corbett) enters her life, things get even worse. (1 hr. 59 mins.; PG) • 1; 12; 17; 27; 29; 45; 48; 61; 62.

National Lampoon's Van Wilder
A smug college party boy (Ryan Reynolds) tries to make money after Dad stops paying his tuition. The film wants to cross-breed *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* with *American Pie,* but Reynolds lacks the charisma. (1 hr. 35 mins.; R) • 10; 16; 17; 49; 56; 59; 61; 69; 72.

★ Nine Queens
The Argentine writer-director Fabian Bielinski has a fine, straightforward storytelling gift, and his movie about two con men (Gaston Pauls and Ricardo Darin) pulling off a half-million-dollar scam is consistently compelling. (Rainer; 4/29/02) (1 hr. 55 mins.; R) • 5; 37.

No Man's Land
Three soldiers are stuck between enemy lines during the Bosnian war in writer-director Danis Tanovic's Oscar-winning debut feature film. (1 hr. 37 mins.; R) • 23; 64.

Panic Room
Jodie Foster is trapped with her daughter (Kristen Stewart) in a high-security room in an Upper West Side townhouse while three intruders attempt to lure her outside. Director David Fincher pulls off a few expert thriller sequences, but most of the movie is relentlessly garish. (Rainer; 4/8/02) (1 hr. 34 mins.; R) • 6; 14; 15; 16; 17; 31; 33; 35; 39; 42; 43; 44; 46; 47; 49; 51; 52; 54; 55; 56; 57; 59; 61; 68; 69; 70; 71; 72; 73; 74.

★ The Piano Teacher
Michael Haneke's movie—about a Viennese piano instructor (Isabelle Huppert) in a prestigious conservatory whose lust for an adoring student (Benoit Magimel) turns into a sadomasochistic folie à deux, is grotesquely shocking. It's not a likable film, but Haneke has a genuine gift for cauterizing experience onscreen. (Rainer; 4/8/02) (2 hrs. 10 mins.; NR) • 3.

Promises
A heartbreaking documentary that follows seven children from both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over the course of four years. (1 hr. 46 mins.; NR) • 7.

Resident Evil
Paul Anderson's adaptation of the popular video game is basically a fancy zombie flick, but the film has a bleak, sadistic intensity all its own. (1 hr. 40 mins.; R) • 21; 43; 44; 51; 59.

★ The Rookie
Dennis Quaid gives a strong, shadowed performance as a science teacher and high-school baseball coach who gets his shot at pitching in the big leagues. (Rainer; 4/15/02) (1 hr. 34 mins.; G) • 10; 15; 16; 17; 19; 26; 38; 49; 52; 61; 71; 72; 74.

★ The Scorpion King
Big, brawny *Mummy* spinoff has pro wrestler and cult phenom the Rock as an ancient mercenary at war with a ruthless despot (Steven Brand). Guess who wins. Though it can be derivative and bombastic, the movie also has a nice swashbuckling sense of fun that's often hard to resist. (1 hr. 28 mins.; PG-13) • 10; 12; 15; 16; 21; 22; 28; 31; 36; 38; 39; 40; 41; 43; 44; 47; 48; 49; 50; 51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 57; 59; 60; 61; 63; 65; 68; 69; 70; 71; 72; 73; 74.

Showtime
Eddie Murphy and Robert De Niro play cops who are banded together to play cops on a reality-TV show. The chemistry between them is near-zilch. (Rainer; 3/25/02) (1 hr. 35 mins.; PG-13) • 15; 17.

Son of the Bride
An Argentine restaurateur (Ricardo Darin) reassesses his life in the wake of a stroke and his father's decision to renew his vows to his mother (Norma Aleandro), who suffers from Alzheimer's disease. Amazingly enough, it's a comedy—and an often hilarious one at that. (2 hrs. 4 mins.; NR) • 7.

★ Space Station
Marvelous 3-D effects are the highlight of this IMAX documentary about the building of the International Space Station. Only drawback: The comically intense

PHOTOGRAPH BY DIYAH PERA.

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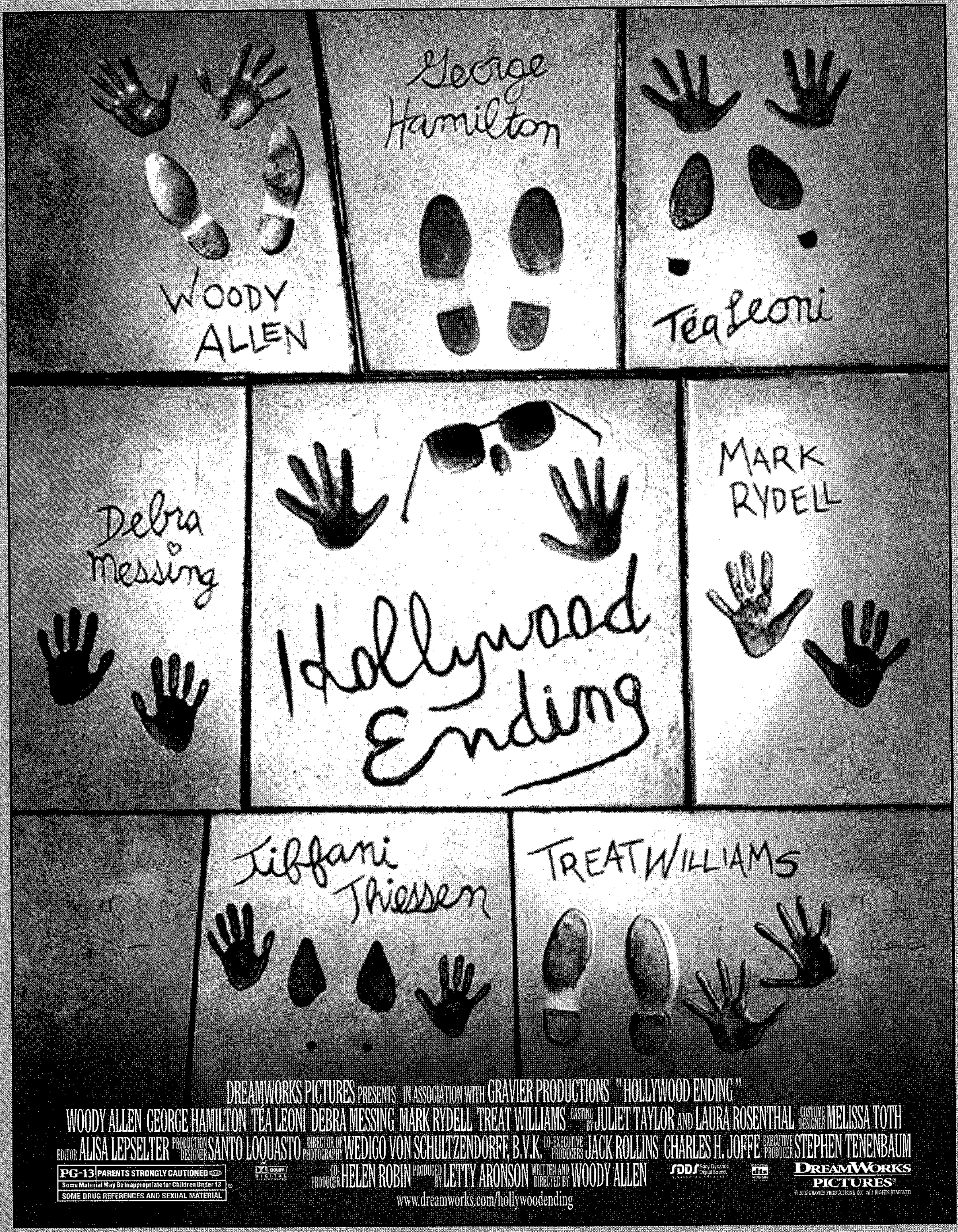
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The first 125 readers to call 1-888-696-2498 on Wednesday, April 24, beginning at noon, will receive a complimentary screening pass for two and automatically be entered into the drawing for dinner for two at The Boathouse Central Park.

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OPENS NATIONWIDE FRIDAY, MAY 3

Tom Cruise narration feels completely out of place. (1 hr. 8 mins.; NR) • 87.

The Sweetest Thing
An annoying, ass-twirling party girl (Cameron Diaz) meets the man of her dreams (Thomas Jane) and sets off on a quest to bag him, with some help from her loyal friends (Christina Applegate and Selma Blair). (1 hr. 24 mins.; R) • 6; 12; 15; 16; 21; 28; 31; 42; 44; 49; 51; 52; 56; 59; 61; 63; 66; 68; 70; 71; 72; 74.

The Time Machine
Guy Pearce plays the Victorian scientist traveling to an apocalyptic future where humans are preyed upon by a strange race of underground monsters. Cue the chasing. Cue the fighting. Cue Jeremy Irons as "*Über*-Morlock." (1 hr. 36 mins.; PG-13) • 23.

Happenings

The Best Picture Shows

A cornucopia of niche movie mini-marathons is opening this week—call them the hors d'oeuvre for the feast that is next month's TriBeCa Film Festival. Whether your taste runs to *anime*, star-studded drama, international documentaries, or punk-rocking shorts, every neighborhood seems to be premiering a unique, genre-bending film. Here, then, a look at four top festivals, and snapshots of what you can expect onscreen. (See "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

The Festival	The Locale	The Skinny	Our Picks
The Back East Picture Show *April 25–28*	Hudson Street Cinemas, 5 Marine View Plaza, Hoboken (201-239-1101); $8.	Fifty-three competing docs, shorts, and animated and feature films; presentations on mob flicks and Jersey auteurs.	Israel Horovitz's *3 Weeks After Paradise,* Danny Aiello in *The Russian Job,* and *Alien Space*, an animated yarn about a hostile little green man.
Brooklyn International Film Festival *April 29–May 5*	Brooklyn Museum of Art, 200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000); $10.	Eighty competing films from 63 countries, including premieres from India, Brazil, Germany, Japan, and Slovenia.	Mike Figgis's *Hotel* (with Salma Hayek, pictured left), *Anacardium,* and *Black Picket Fence*, a doc about a Brooklyn hustler.
Gen Art Film Festival *April 24–30*	Loews 34th Street Cinema, 312 West 34th Street (212-971-5420); $5.	Seven premiering features and shorts, all with strong Hollywood buzz.	*Love in the Time of Money* (with Jill Hennessy and Steve Buscemi, pictured right), *Face,* and *Hell House.*
The Picture Show *April 27–29*	Arlene Grocery, 95 Stanton Street (212-353-3315); free.	One hundred short films playing in 48 hours: Anything goes at this festival presented by *The Onion.*	*Barbie Tambien Estar Triste, Day Is Done,* and *69 Minutes of Fame* (pictured, top), a doc about Long Island's trash-metal madmen.

★ Time Out
A small-scale masterpiece from Laurent Cantet. Aurelien Recoing plays a father who doesn't tell his family he's been fired from his job and lives out a shadow existence in which he pretends to still work. (Rainer; 3/25/02) (1 hr. 42 mins.; R) • 1; 37.

★ The Triumph of Love
A lovely romantic comedy directed by Clare Peploe starring Mira Sorvino as a princess who disguises herself as a man in order to woo the exiled rightful heir to her throne. Ben Kingsley and Fiona Shaw also star. (Rainer; 4/22/02) (1 hr. 47 mins.; PG-13) • 1; 18.

World Traveler
Billy Crudup plays a boozy architect drifting from town to town, afraid to return to his wife and kid. Episodic story lacks focus, but director Bart Freundlich gets the on-the-road feel just right. Co-starring Julianne Moore. (1 hr. 44 mins.; R) • 17.

★ Y Tu Mamá También
Alfonso Cuarón's road movie is the funniest and freshest sex comedy of its kind since Bertrand Blier's *Going Places.* Two teenage Mexican boys, played marvelously well by Gael García Bernal and Diego Luna, set out for the beach with the disaffected wife of a cousin of theirs, played by Maribel Verdu as a mixture of slut and angel of mercy. (Rainer; 3/18/02) (1 hr. 45 mins.; NR) • 5; 14; 17; 26; 28; 37; 45; 48; 62.

Yugoslavia, The Avoidable War
This long and damning documentary blames the Germans, the Croats, the Bosnian Muslims, and the international press for coaxing NATO into the war in Yugoslavia. (2 hrs. 45 min.; NR) • 9.

Manhattan

Below 14th Street

1. CC Angelika Film Center
18 W. Houston St. (212-995-2000) • Amélie; The Cat's Meow; Enigma; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Time Out; The Triumph of Love

2. CC Village East
189 Second Ave. (212-529-6799) • Crush; Festival in Cannes; In the Bedroom; Italian for Beginners; Monster's Ball; The Royal Tenenbaums

3. Cinema Village
22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363) • Les Destinées; Mule Skinner Blues; Mutant Aliens; The Piano Teacher

4. Film Forum
209 W. Houston St. (212-727-8110) • Karmen Gei (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

5. Landmark Sunshine Cinema
143 E. Houston St. (212-358-7709) • Kissing Jessica Stein; Monsoon Wedding; Nine Queens; Y Tu Mamá También

6. Loews Village
66 Third Ave. (212-50-LOEWS#952) • Changing Lanes; Chelsea Walls; Death To Smoochy; Panic Room; The Sweetest Thing

7. Quad Cinema
34 W. 13th St. (212-255-8800) • Girls Can't Swim; Lantana; Murderous Maids; Promises; Son of the Bride

8. The Screening Room
54 Varick St. (212-334-2100) • Amadeus: Director's Cut; Iris (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

9. Two Boots Pioneer Theater
155 E. 3rd St. (212-212-254-3300) • Caesar's Park; Donnie Darko; Trouble Every Day; Yugoslavia, The Avoidable War

10. UA Union Square
13th St. and Broadway (212-253-2225) • Blade 2; Frailty; Gosford Park; High Crimes; Human Nature; Ice Age; The Last Waltz; The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring; Murder by Numbers; National Lampoon's Van Wilder; The Rookie; The Scorpion King

14th–41st Streets

11. CC Murray Hill Cinemas
160 E. 34th St. (212-689-6548) • Amadeus: Director's Cut; Amélie; High Crimes; Iris

12. Clearview's Chelsea
260 W. 23rd St. (212-777-FILM#597) • Chelsea Walls; Frailty; High Crimes; Kissing Jessica Stein; Murder by Numbers; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

13. Clearview's Chelsea West
333 W. 23rd St. (212-777-FILM#614) • Human Nature; Murder by Numbers

14. Loews 19th St. East
890 Broadway, at 19th St. (212-50-LOEWS#858) • Changing Lanes; Enigma; Monster's Ball; Panic Room; Y Tu Mamá También

15. Loews 34th St. Theatre
312 W. 34th St. (212-244-8850) • Blade 2; Changing Lanes; Frailty; Monsoon Wedding; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; The Rookie; The Scorpion King; Showtime; The Sweetest Thing

16. Loews Kips Bay Theatre
550 Second Ave., at 32nd St. (212-50–LOEWS#558) • A Beautiful Mind; Blade 2; Changing Lanes; Clockstoppers; Frailty; Murder by Numbers; National Lampoon's Van Wilder; Panic Room; The Rookie; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

42nd–60th Streets

17. AMC Empire 25 Theatres
234 W. 42nd St. (212-398-3939) • All About the Benjamins; Amélie; A Beautiful Mind; Big Trouble; Clockstoppers; Crush; Death to Smoochy; E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial; Enigma; High Crimes; Human Nature; Ice Age; John Q; Kissing Jessica Stein; Lucky Break; Monster's Ball; Murder by Numbers; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; National Lampoon's Van Wilder; Panic Room; The Rookie; Showtime; World Traveler; Y Tu Mamá También

18. CC Cinemas 1, 2, 3
1001 Third Ave., at 60th St. (212-753-6022) • Enigma; Murder by Numbers; The Triumph of Love

19. CC Eastside Playhouse
919 Third Ave., nr. 55th St. (212-755-3020) • The Rookie

20. Clearview's Ziegfeld
141 W. 54th St. (212-777-FILM#602) • High Crimes

21. Loews 42nd Street E Walk
42nd St. at Eighth Ave. (212-50-LOEWS#572) • Blade

PHOTOGRPAHS, FROM TOP: COURTESY OF MARK FOSTER; COURTESY OF BROOKLYN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL; COURTESY OF GEN ART FILM FESTIVAL.

2; Changing Lanes; Frailty; Resident Evil; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

22. Loews Astor Plaza
44th St. at Eighth Ave. (212-50-LOEWS#699) • The Scorpion King

23. Loews State
1540 Broadway, nr. 45th St. (212-50-LOEWS#901) • No Man's Land; The Time Machine; Training Day

24. New York Twin
1271 Second Ave., nr. 66th St. (212-505-CINE#590) • Changing Lanes; Gosford Park

25. Paris Theatre
4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800) • Monsoon Wedding

61st Street and Above, East Side

26. CC 86th St. East
210 E. 86th St. (212-777-FILM#763) • Frailty; High Crimes; The Rookie; Y Tu Mamá También

27. Clearview's Beekman
1254 Second Ave., nr. 65th St. (212-777-FILM#606) • My Big Fat Greek Wedding

28. Clearview's First & 62nd St.
400 E. 62nd St. (212-777-FILM#957) • A Beautiful Mind; High Crimes; Kissing Jessica Stein; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing; Y Tu Mamá También

29. Clearview's Park and 86th St.
125 E. 86th St. (212-777-FILM#604) • Ice Age; My Big Fat Greek Wedding

30. Loews 72nd St. East
1230 Third Ave., nr. 72nd St. (212-50-LOEWS#704) • Monster's Ball

31. Loews Orpheum 7
1538 Third Ave., at 86th St. (212-50-LOEWS#964) • Blade 2; Changing Lanes; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

32. UA East
1629 First Ave., at 85th St. (212-249-5100) • Kissing Jessica Stein

33. UA Gemini
1210 Second Ave., at 64th St. (212-832-1670) • The Cat's Meow; Ice Age; Panic Room

61st Street and Above, West Side

34. Clearview's 62nd and Broadway
1871 Broadway, at 62nd St. (212-777-FILM#864) • Kissing Jessica Stein

35. Clearview's Metro Cinema
2626 Broadway, nr. 99th St. (212-777-FILM#609) • Changing Lanes; Panic Room

36. Clearview's Olympia
2770 Broadway, nr. 106th St. (212-777-FILM#613) • The Scorpion King

37. Lincoln Plaza Cinemas
30 Lincoln Plaza, on Broadway nr. 62nd St. (212-757-2280) • Human Nature; Les Destinées; Murderous Maids; Nine Queens; Time Out; Y Tu Mamá También

38. Loews 84th Street
2310 Broadway, at 84th St. (212-50-LOEWS#701) • Blade 2; Frailty; The Rookie; The Scorpion King

39. Magic Johnson Harlem USA
300 W. 125th St. (212-665-8733) • All About the Benjamins; Blade 2; Changing Lanes; Frailty; High Crimes; Ice Age; Panic Room; The Scorpion King

40. New Coliseum
701 W. 181st St. (212-740-1545) • Changing Lanes; Frailty; The Scorpion King

41. Nova
3589 Broadway, nr. 147th St. (212-862-5728) • Changing Lanes; Frailty; The Scorpion King

42. Sony Lincoln Square
1998 Broadway, at 68th St. (212-50-LOEWS#638) • Amadeus: Director's Cut; A Beautiful Mind; The Cat's Meow; Changing Lanes; Clockstoppers; Enigma; Gosford Park; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; The Sweetest Thing

Bronx

43. Concourse Plaza
214 E. 161th St. (718-588-8800) • Blade 2; Changing Lanes; Clockstoppers; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; Resident Evil; The Scorpion King

44. Whitestone
2505 Bruckner Blvd., at Hutchinson River Pkwy. (718-409-9030) • Blade 2; Changing Lanes; Clockstoppers; Frailty; High Crimes; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; Resident Evil; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

Brooklyn

45. BAM Rose Cinemas
30 Lafayette Ave. (718-623-2770) • Monsoon Wedding; Monster's Ball; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Y Tu Mamá También

46. Brooklyn Heights Pavilion
70 Henry St. (718-369-0838) • Murder by Numbers; Panic Room

47. Canarsie
9310 Ave. L, at E. 93rd St. (718-251-0700) • Frailty; Panic Room; The Scorpion King

48. Cobble Hill Cinema
265 Court St. (718-596-9113) • Changing Lanes; Lantana; Monsoon Wedding; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; The Scorpion King; Y Tu Mamá También

49. Court Street 12
106 Court St. (718-246-7469) • Blade 2; Changing Lanes; Clockstoppers; Frailty; High Crimes; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; National Lampoon's Van Wilder; Panic Room; The Rookie; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

50. Kent Triplex
Coney Island Ave. at Ave. H (718-338-3371) • Changing Lanes; Murder by Numbers; The Scorpion King

51. Linden Boulevard Multiplex
Linden Blvd. and Eldert Lane (718-277-0303) • All About the Benjamins; Blade 2; Changing Lanes; Clockstoppers; Frailty; High Crimes; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; Resident Evil; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

52. Pavilion
188 Prospect Park West (718-369-0838) • Changing Lanes; Clockstoppers; Enigma; Human Nature; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; The Rookie; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

53. Pavilion Flatbush
314 Flatbush Ave. (718-596-7070) • Changing Lanes; High Crimes; The Scorpion King

54. Ridgewood
55-27 Myrtle Ave., at Putnam Ave. (718-821-5993) • Frailty; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; The Scorpion King

55. UA Marboro
6817 Bay Pkwy., at 69th St. (718-232-4000) • Clockstoppers; Frailty; Ice Age; Panic Room; The Scorpion King

56. UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay
3907 Shore Pkwy., off Exit 9 at Belt Pkwy. (718-615-1700) • Blade 2; Changing Lanes; High Crimes; Murder by Numbers; National Lampoon's Van Wilder; Panic Room; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

Queens

57. Centre Sunnyside
42-17 Queens Blvd. (718-361-6869) • Changing Lanes; Frailty; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; The Scorpion King

58. Cinemart
106-03 Metropolitan Ave., at 72nd Rd., Forest Hills (718-261-2244) • Clockstoppers; E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial; Enigma; Frailty; Human Nature

59. College Point Multiplex
28-55 Ulmer St., Whitestone (718-886-4900) • Blade 2; Changing Lanes; Clockstoppers; E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; National Lampoon's Van Wilder; Panic Room; Resident Evil; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

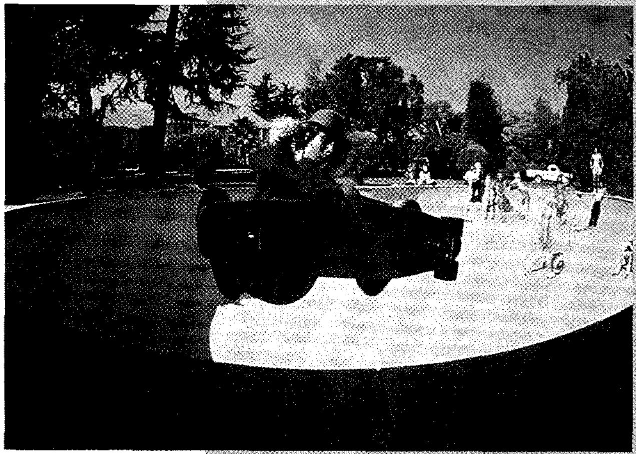
60. Jackson Triplex
82nd St. at Roosevelt Ave. (718-478-6777) • Changing Lanes; Murder by Numbers; The Scorpion King

61. Kaufman Astoria Cinema
38th St. at 35th Ave. (718-786-2020) • Astoria; Blade 2; Changing Lanes; Clockstoppers; Frailty; High Crimes; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; National Lampoon's Van Wilder; Panic Room; The Rookie; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

Opening

A Bunch of Board Kids

"Every skateboard and surf film that Hollywood's ever made has been stupid," says Stacy Peralta, the director of **Dogtown and Z-Boys**. Peralta spent his teenhood wheeling around Dogtown, the Venice Beach ghetto where the Zephyr Surf Shop became an early-seventies clubhouse for Tony Alva (pictured), Jay Adams, and the other misfits who were inadvertently creating a new sport and a cultural phenomenon. When he heard that a big film about 'boarders was in the works, Peralta jumped in and made his own as a preemptive strike: "It was too valuable an experience to let Hollywood fictionalize before we were able to tell our story ourselves." Their rags-to-riches-in-rags story—a prize-winner at Sundance last year—is told through old photographs, Super-8 clips, and narration by Sean Penn. "Sean grew up in our area," Peralta says. "We all went to school with a bunch of Spicolis." *Dogtown* is Peralta's first feature; he learned about filmmaking when he ran the skateboard company Powell Peralta and shot a cultish series of skateboarding videos. In 1991, Powell Peralta disbanded, and Stacy went to work behind the camera full-time: "I took the back door into directing—nonfiction television," Peralta says. *Dogtown*—effectively his autobiography—is, needless to say, a little closer to his heart. "It was a mission, but I had this opportunity to preserve and present our story." Opens April 26. B.K.



PHOTOGRAPH BY GLEN E. FRIEDMAN.

62. Kew Gardens Cinemas
81-05 Lefferts Blvd. (718-441-9835) • Kissing Jessica Stein; Monsoon Wedding; My Big Fat Greek Wedding; Y Tu Mamá También

63. Main Street Cinemas
72-66 Main St. (718-263-4828) • Changing Lanes; E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial; Frailty; High Crimes; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; Return to Neverland; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

64. North Shore Towers
27-10 Grand Central Pkwy., Floral Park (718-229-7702) • Iris; John Q; Monster's Ball; No Man's Land

65. Plaza
103–14 Roosevelt Ave., at 103rd St., Corona (718-639-0012) • Changing Lanes; Clockstoppers; The Scorpion King

66. UA Brandon Cinema
70-20 Austin St., Forest Hills (718-544-1020) • Murder by Numbers; The Sweetest Thing

67. UA Crossbay
94-11 Rockaway Blvd., at Woodhaven Blvd., Ozone Park (718-848-1738) • Blade 2; Clockstoppers; Frailty; High Crimes

68. UA Crossbay II
92-10 Rockaway Blvd., at 93rd St., Ozone Park (718-641-5330) • Changing Lanes; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

69. UA Midway
108-22 Queens Blvd., at 71st Ave., Forest Hills (718-544-5545) • A Beautiful Mind; Blade 2; Changing Lanes; High Crimes; Ice Age; National Lampoon's Van Wilder; Panic Room; The Scorpion King

70. UA Movieworld
242-02 61st Ave., off Exit 31, Douglaston (718-423-7200) • Changing Lanes; High Crimes; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

Staten Island

71. Atrium
680 Arthur Kill Rd., nr. Richmond Ave., Eltingville (718-317-8300) • Changing Lanes; Clockstoppers; Frailty; High Crimes; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; The Rookie; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

72. Staten Island Stadium 16
2474 Forest Ave. (718-273-4200) • Blade 2; Changing Lanes; Clockstoppers; Frailty; High Crimes; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; National Lampoon's Van Wilder; Panic Room; The Rookie; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

73. UA Hylan Plaza
107 Mill Rd., at Hylan Blvd., New Dorp (718-351-0805) • Changing Lanes; Ice Age; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; The Scorpion King

74. UA Movies at Staten Island
141 E. Service Rd., at Victory Blvd., Travis (718-983-9600) • Blade 2; Changing Lanes; Frailty; High Crimes; Ice Age; Kissing Jessica Stein; The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring; Monsoon Wedding; Murder by Numbers; Panic Room; The Rookie; The Scorpion King; The Sweetest Thing

Museums, Societies, Etc.

75. Anthology Film Archives
32 Second Ave. (212-505-5110); $8. • "Asian Films Are Go!!!" 4/26: *Bang Rajan* (2001); *Pistol Opera* (2001); *Visitor Q* (2001). 4/27: *Gamera 2* (1996); *Gamera 3* (1999); *One Fine Spring Day* (2001); *Pistol Opera* (2001); *Visitor Q* (2001). 4/28: *Jiang Hu: The Triad Zone* (2000); *Kick the Moon* (2001); *My Sassy Girl* (2001); *Freeze Me* (2000). 4/29: *Gamera 3* (1999); *Bang Rajan* (2001). 4/30: *Dil Se* (1998); *Freeze Me* (2000). 5/1: *Jiang Hu: The Triad Zone* (2000); *Kick the Moon* (2001). 5/2: *One Fine Spring Day* (2001); *My Sassy Girl* (2001).

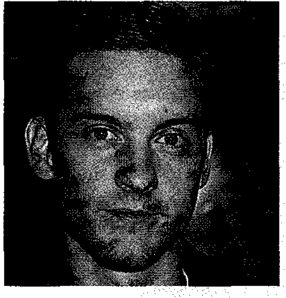
76. The Back East Picture Show
(Hudson Street Cinemas) 5 Marine View Plaza, Hoboken, N.J. (201-239-1101); $8. • (Films from 2002). 4/25: *Catching*; *Rats*; *Hunting Humans*; *Three Weeks After Paradise*; *Four Deadly Reasons*; *This Thing of Ours*. 4/27: *Alien Space*; *Get the Hell Out of Heaven*; *Welcome to the Family*; *Don't Ask, Don't Tell*; *The Russian Job*; *Hoboken Tales* (2002). 4/29: "The Best of the Fest."

77. Brooklyn Museum of Art
200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000); $10. • "Brooklyn International Film Festival." 4/29: *Hotel* (2002). 4/30: *To Love, Too Much* (2001); *Anacardium* (2001); *The Orphan of Anyang* (2001). 5/1: *So Far Away and Blue* (2001); *Peroxide Passion* (2001); *Missing Persons* (2002). 5/2: *Area K: A Political Fishing* (2001); *The Princess Blade* (2001); *Black Picket Fence* (2002). 5/3: *Keeping It Real: The Adventures of Greg Walloch* (2001); *Hotel* (2001); *Juletta* (2001). 5/4: *Paperboys* (2001); *Operation Midnight Climax* (2002); *Point of View* (2002). 5/5: *Pale Male* (2002); *Strike a Light* (2001); *Beauty Queen* (2001); *Getting My Brother Laid* (2001).

78. Film Forum
209 W. Houston St. (212-727-8110); $9.75. • 4/23-4/29: *The Sweet Smell of Success* (1957).

79. Film Society of Lincoln Center
65 W. 65th St., plaza level (212-875-5600); $9. • "After the War, Before the Wall: German Cinema, 1945-1960." 4/25: *The Hooligans* (1956); *The Trapp Family in America* (1958). 4/26: *The Heart of St. Pauli* (1957); *The Spessart Inn* (1957). 4/27: *Widower With Five Daughters* (1957); *Sharks and Small Fish* (1957). 5/1: *A Call Girl Named Rosemarie* (1959). 5/2: *Aren't We Wonderful?* (1958).

80. Gen Art Film Festival
1998 Broadway, at 68th St. (212-971-4520); $35. • (Films from 2002) 4/24: *Love in the Time of Money*. 4/25 (Loews Cineplex, 312 W. 34th): *Face*. 4/26: *Tattoo: A Love Story*. 4/27: *Hell House*. 4/28: *OnLine*. 4/29: *Solitude*. 4/30 (Loews Lincoln Square; 1998 Broadway, at 68th St.): *Snipes*.



81. Japan Society
333 E. 47th St. (212-832-1155); $9. • "New Films From Japan." 5/3: *The Season of Cherry Blossoms* (2000).

82. Makor
35 W. 67th St. (212-601-1000); $9. • 4/29-5/2: *Jails, Hospitals & Hip-Hop* (2000).

83. Museum of Modern Art
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480); free with $10 admission, $6.50 for students and seniors. • "A Work in Progress: The Films of David O. Russell." 4/25: *Flirting With Disaster* (1996); *Spanking the Monkey* (1994). 4/26: *Three Kings* (1999); *Flirting With Disaster* (1996). 4/27: *Spanking the Monkey* (1994); *Three Kings* (1999).

84. The Picture Show
(Arlene Grocery) 95 Stanton St. (212-353-3315); free. • (Films from 2002) 4/27: *Chez Risque*; *Flesh*; *The Hitman*; *Monkey Monkey*; *I Got Stuff*; *69 Minutes of Fame*; *Muddy Water Blues*; *Second Chances*; *Day Is Done*; *Bottle of Wine*; *Low Flame*; *Ode to Ally McBeal*. 4/28: *Hack*; *Woman*; *Wrong Floor*; *An Open Position*; *Wrong Floor*; *Benny's Big Day*; *Bored of the Rings*; *Barbie También Puede Estar Triste*.

85. Raw Space Screening Room
531 W. 42nd St. (212-643-8304); $8. • "Chinese River Stories Weekend." 4/26-4/28: *Men's River* (1999); *Raftsman* (1991); *River Without Buoys* (1983); *Red River Valley* (1996).

86. The Screening Room
54 Varick St. (212-334-2100); $9. • "For & About Women." 4/26: *Me Without You* (2001); *Haut Les Coeurs!* (1999). 4/27: *Lifetime Guarantee: Phranc's Adventures in Plastic* (2001); *The Girls' Room* (2000); *Mama Africa* (1999). 4/28: *My Father, the Genius* (2002); *Alive* (2001); *Lovely Rita* (2001); *The Dogwalker* (2001). 4/30: *Every Room in the House* (2002); *How I Killed My Father* (2001). 5/1: *Daughter From Danang* (2002); *By Hook or by Crook* (2001); *Acts of Worship* (2001); *Margarita Happy Hour* (2001).

87. Sony IMAX Lincoln Square
1988 Broadway, at 68th St. (212-LOEWS#638); $9.50. • *Across the Sea of Time*; *China: The Panda Adventure*; *Mysteries of Egypt*; *Space Station*.

88. The Leonard Nimoy Thalia
2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (212-864-5400); $9. • "Classic French Cinema." 4/27-28: *Jules and Jim* (1961); *François Truffaut: Portraits Volés* (1993). 4/27: *Jules and Jim* (1961); *François Truffaut: Portraits Volés* (1993). 4/28: *Jules and Jim* (1961). 5/4-5/5: *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972); *Belle du Jour* (1967).

TRAILERS

SEE YOU IN COURT! **John Cusack** has signed to star in the latest **John Grisham** adaptation, *The Runaway Jury*. Rising starlet **Naomi Watts** (*Mulholland Drive*) is in talks to join the thriller, in which a jury foreman (Cusack) is pressured by a gun manufacturer who stands accused. **Gary Fleder** (*Kiss the Girls*) directs and **Christopher Mankiewicz** produces for Fox; production is scheduled to start later this year.

ARACHNOPHILIA Sony already has a sequel or two to its anticipated summer blockbuster *Spider-Man* in the works. **Tobey Maguire** and **Kirsten Dunst** have signed on to appear as Peter Parker–Spider Man and his love interest, Mary Jane Watson, with **Sam Raimi** (*Army of Darkness, The Gift*) returning to direct; production will kick off next summer. The original film, which opens next week, was shot in New York last spring.

DR. FAUSTUS, I PRESUME? *The Mummy*'s **Rachel Weisz** has reportedly signed on to star in *Marlowe*, opposite **Jude Law**, for Alliance Atlantis Films. Law will play Marlowe's rival (and perhaps alter ego) William Shakespeare; the role of Christopher Marlowe himself—memorably played by **Rupert Everett** in *Shakespeare in Love*—has yet to be cast. **John Maybury** (*Love Is the Devil*) will direct; production is scheduled to start in Europe later this year.

BACK UPTOWN Warner Bros. has a remake of the classic **Bill Cosby–Sidney Poitier** comedy *Uptown Saturday Night*—which also starred **Richard Pryor** and **Flip Wilson**—in the works. Former Fresh Prince **Will Smith** (whose *Men in Black 2* hits theaters this summer) will produce with his Overbrook Entertainment partner, **James Lassiter**, and take a starring role in the film, which follows two men as they go after the guys who stole their winning lottery ticket. SARA CARDACE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBIN PLATZER/TWIN IMAGES.

cue

Theater

Edited by Logan Hill

Broadway

Previews and Openings

Into the Woods
Vanessa Williams stars in Stephen Sondheim's mythic musical, a shadowy journey through the fairy-tale forests of Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, and others. $40–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 4/30 opening. (See box.) • Broadhurst Theater, 235 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

The Man Who Had All the Luck
The first play by Arthur Miller to make it to Broadway, this 1944 drama about a seemingly blessed young Midwesterner stars Chris O'Donnell, Samantha Mathis, Mason Adams, James Rebhorn, and Sam Robards. Scott Ellis directs. $40–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. In previews for a 5/1 opening. • American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. (212-719-1300).

The Mystery of Charles Dickens
Simon Callow plays Dickens and 49 of his creations in this solo show, written by biographer Peter Ackroyd. $35–$65. In previews for a 4/25 opening. • Belasco Theatre, 111 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

Private Lives
This anticipated revival of Noel Coward's crisp, romantic comedy, starring Lindsay Duncan and Alan Rickman, heads to Broadway after winning rave reviews and scads of awards on the West End. Howard Davies directs. $20–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 4/28 opening. • Richard Rodgers Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. (212-307-4100).

Now Playing

Aida
Disney's epic musical about the love affair between a Nubian slave and a cute Egyptian prince, with music by Elton John and lyrics by Tim Rice. $25–$90. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Palace Theatre, 1554 Broadway, at 47th St. (212-307-4747).

Beauty and the Beast
The family-friendly musical adaptation of Disney's film is no *Lion King*, but it's still entertaining kids by the busload. $25–$85. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. • Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 205 W. 46th St. (212-307-4747).

★ Cabaret
This gritty revival of the Kander and Ebb musical won four Tonys in 1998 for its portrayal of the decadent world of Weimar-era Berlin cabaret. Based on Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Stories*, the production has a much darker edge than the Bob Fosse film. Now starring Molly Ringwald and Raúl Esparza. $25–$95. Mon., Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. • Studio 54, 254 W. 54th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Chicago
This delightfully raunchy musical tribute to tough women and the men they murder won six Tonys in 1996. In this stylish production, choreographed by Ann Reinking and directed by Walter Bobbie, female inmates in a Jazz Age Chicago prison vie for the attention of a flashy lawyer and the tabloid press. $20–$90. Mon., Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. • Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Contact
This sensational, Tony-blessed dance-theater work by John Weidman and Broadway's reigning director-choreographer, Susan Stroman, presents a triptych of inventive pieces, ranging from a naughty flirtation to a suicidal adman's frantic fantasy. $90. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (212-239-6200).

The Crucible
Liam Neeson and Laura Linney star in Arthur Miller's allegorical tale of the Salem witch trials. $40–$85. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Wed. and Sat–Sun. at 2. • Virginia Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St. (212-239-6200)

★ Elaine Stritch at Liberty
Directed by George Wolfe, Elaine Stritch's thunderstorm of a solo show is a ferocious summation of a life lived furiously. $40–$85. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 5. • Neil Simon Theatre, 250 W. 52nd St. (212-307-4100).

The Elephant Man
Billy Crudup, Kate Burton, and Rupert Graves star in Bernard Pomerance's drama. Based on the real story of John Merrick, the Victorian-era sideshow celebrity, the emotional work racked up a shelf of awards in 1979 and was adapted to a 1980 David Lynch film. Sean Mathias directs; music by Philip Glass. $50–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Royale Theatre, 242 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

Fortune's Fool
Alan Bates and Frank Langella star in Mike Poulton's new adaptation of the Turgenev comedy about a gentleman who, goaded by his ribald neighbor, shocks his community with an unexpected announcement. $55–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat at 2, Sun. at 3. • Music Box Theater, 239 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

★ 42nd Street
Come and meet those dancin' feet. This revival of the Al Dubin and Harry Warren musical about the proverbial chorus girl who gets her big break is snappily directed by Mark Bramble, with exuberant choreography by Randy Skinner, and features a top-notch cast: Michael Cumpsty, Christine Ebersole, David Elder, Jonathan Freeman, and Mary Testa. $25–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. (212-307-4100).

★ The Full Monty
A rambunctious yet heartfelt musical adaptation of the 1997 film about desperate, destitute men who have nothing to lose but their underwear. $31–$86. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Eugene O'Neill Theatre, 230 W. 49th St. (212-239-6200).

★ The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?
Edward Albee's anticipated new play follows a successful architect (Bill Pullman) who, at the pinnacle of his career, must confess to his wife (Mercedes Ruehl) and son some awful secret. $65–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • John Golden Theatre, 252 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

The Graduate
Kathleen Turner plays Mrs. Robinson in Terry Johnson's new stage adaptation of the 1967 film, opposite Alicia Silverstone and Jason Biggs. $40–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Plymouth Theatre, 236 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

Les Misérables
An audacious button-pusher with over-the-top songs like "Do You Hear the People Sing?" and "I Dreamed a Dream," producer Cameron Mackintosh's mega-hit, based on the Victor Hugo novel, still stands as the best of the big British commercial imports. $20–$90. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Imperial Theater, 249 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

★ The Lion King
Based on the popular Disney movie, this sublimely inventive production showcases some of the best experimental theater techniques of a generation, wrought with joyful mastery by experimental director extraordinaire Julie Taymor. $30–$95. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. • New Amsterdam Theater, 214 W. 42nd St. (212-307-4747).

★ Mamma Mia!
An unabashedly silly feel-good musical about a young bride-to-be and her single mom, scored with 22 shimmery disco tunes by Abba's Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus. $55–$98.75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Winter Garden Theater, 1634 Broadway, at 50th St. (212-563-5544).

★ Metamorphoses
Mary Zimmerman and her company put a 27-foot-long pool of water to perfect use, stressing the elemental nature of Ovid's classic tales of Midas, Narcissus, and more. Myths are rendered with dramatic flair, unpretentious humor, and a heartbreaking final tableau. $30–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Circle in the Square Theatre, 1633 Broadway (212-239-6200).

Morning's at Seven
A strong veteran ensemble, including Elizabeth Franz, Buck Henry, Christopher Lloyd, Estelle Parsons, and Frances Sternhagen, plays a Midwestern family coping with maturity in Paul Osborn's 1939 drama. $40–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Lyceum Theatre, 149 W. 45 St. (212-239-6200).

Previews

A Good Witch

Out-of-town reviews for this season's most anticipated Broadway revival, Stephen Sondheim's dark and fanciful **Into the Woods**, were tremendous—and not just because Sondheim and director-librettist James Lapine added a dancing, prancing cow. Critics couldn't help but note the timely tears that met the elegiac ballad "No One Is Alone," a clear-eyed eulogy sung in the aftermath of a giant catastrophe. Gossips are already buzzing that Vanessa Williams (pictured) is thriving as the Witch in Sondheim's dark synthesis of primal fables—and why shouldn't she? She's had something of a fairy-tale life herself: crowned Miss America at the ball in 1983, stripped of her crown when the clock tolled midnight (and pictures of her appeared in *Penthouse*) in 1984, Williams is now living happily ever after with her Prince Charming, L.A. Lakers forward Rick Fox. In previews for an April 30 opening. (See "Broadway.")

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOAN MARCUS.

★ Noises Off
Patti LuPone, Peter Gallagher, Richard Easton, and Faith Prince star in this lively revival of Michael Frayn's slapstick farce about a touring theatrical troupe. $40–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Brooks Atkinson Theatre, 256 W. 47th St. (212-307-4100).

★ Oklahoma!
Super-choreographer Susan Stroman and director Trevor Nunn bring their acclaimed revival of the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic Stateside. An award-winning smash in London with many of the best-known show tunes ever, the production stars Patrick Wilson (*The Full Monty*) as Curly, Josefina Gabrielle as Laurey, and the terrific Shuler Hensley. $20–$90. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St. (212-307-4100).

The Phantom of the Opera
Andrew Lloyd Webber's campy version of the macabre tale, given an opulent spin by director Hal Prince. $20–$90. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Majestic Theater, 247 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

★ The Producers
Max Bialystock and Leo Bloom produce the ultimate "surefire flop," *Springtime for Hitler*, in Mel Brooks's triumphant musical and Tony Award record-setter. Based on his Oscar-winning 1968 film, directed and choreographed with aplomb by Susan Stroman, this giddy romp remains the hottest ticket in town, even though Brad Oscar and Steven Weber have replaced stars Lane and Broderick. $30–$100. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 2, Sun. at 7:30. • St. James Theatre, 246 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Proof
Jennifer Jason Leigh plays a chronically depressed young woman whose father, a famous mathematician, recently lost his mind and then his life. When Catherine's type-A sister rolls into town for the funeral, a graduate student (the exceptional Josh Hamilton) finds a groundbreaking proof among her father's otherwise nonsensical papers and Catherine is jolted out of her near-catatonic state and into the confusing world around her. Justly rewarded with a Pulitzer, David Auburn's *Proof* is a virtuoso piece of writing. $24–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Walter Kerr Theatre, 219 W. 48th St. (212-239-6200).

"QED"
Alan Alda returns in Peter Parnell's longish two-character drama about the quirky physicist Richard Feynman. Sun. and Mon. at 7:30. Through 5/13. • Vivian Beaumont Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (212-239-6200).

★ Rent
The late Jonathan Larson's hauntingly scored, Pulitzer-winning reimagining of Puccini's *La Bohème* as lived by a gaggle of East Village hipsters at the peak of grunge and the AIDS epidemic. $35–$80. Mon., Tues., Thurs. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 2 and 7. Opened: 4/29/96. • Nederlander Theater, 208 W. 41st St. (212-307-4100).

The Smell of the Kill
Lisa Emery, Claudia Shear, and Jessica Stone play three middle-aged women who trap their husbands in a meat locker. Michele Lowe's dark new comedy is directed by Christopher Ashley. $45–$70. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Helen Hayes Theatre, 240 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

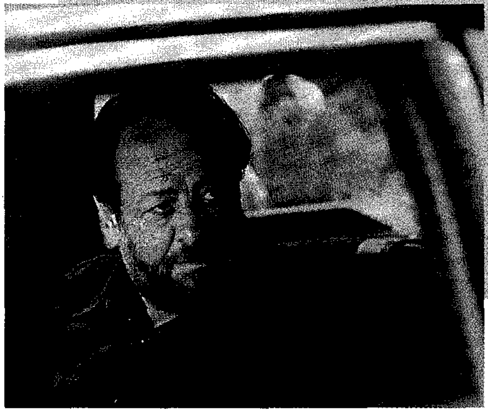
Sweet Smell of Success
John Lithgow stars as J. J. Hunsecker, the powerful gossip columnist, in this disappointing musical adaptation based on the Ernest Lehman novella and the brutal Lehman–Clifford Odets screenplay. $26–$96. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Martin Beck Theatre, 302 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

The Tale of the Allergist's Wife
In this shticky Manhattan comedy by downtown "gender illusionist" and camp playwright Charles Busch, Tony Roberts and Valerie Harper play a hyper allergist and his frazzled wife, whose worlds are upended by the arrival of a globetrotting debutante. $30–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Barrymore Theatre, 243 W. 47th St. (212-239-6200).

Previews

Jay's Stageful of Anomalies

The last time sleight-of-hand master, author, historian, Bob Dylan–video star, raconteur, and general phenomenon Ricky Jay came to town, he astonished crowds with his "52 assistants"—a deck of playing cards. So it's a little frightening to imagine what he'll do when he pulls out all the stops for the nearly sold-out, already extended run of **Ricky Jay: On the Stem**, a tribute to the kind of sidelight traditions of Broadway ("the Stem") that you won't find on the wall of Joe Allen. Author of the terrific and mercifully accessible historical compendia *Jay's Journal of Anomalies* and *Learned Pigs & Fireproof Women*, Jay (pictured) will spin tales of con artists, spiritualists, gamblers, pickpockets, magicians, and burlesque entertainers while performing (and even improving upon) their legendary entertainments. Expect to see bits of Hubert's Flea Museum (a 42nd Street landmark from a century ago) and the "Automaton Orange Tree," a perplexing device invented in 1848 by Robert-Houdin, the master magician whose name was appropriated, in homage, by Houdini. Once again, longtime admirer David Mamet directs. In previews for a May 2 opening. (See "Broadway.")



Thoroughly Modern Millie
(See John Simon's review in this issue.) Based on the 1967 film, this spritely new musical tracks Jazz Age flapper Millie Dillmount (Sutton Foster) through the streets of New York. $55–$95. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Marquis Theatre, 1535 Broadway, at 45th St. (212-307-4100).

★ Topdog/Underdog
Reprising the titanic performance he delivered last summer, Jeffrey Wright stars with Mos Def in the Broadway transfer of the Suzan-Lori Parks drama. As Lincoln and Booth, the actors play two rival brothers stuck in a ramshackle apartment, fighting over the past and the arcane art of three-card monte. $15–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 2, Sun. at 7. • Ambassador Theatre, 215 W. 49th St. (212-239-6200).

Urinetown
A downtown hit, this weird musical, with book and lyrics by Greg Kotis and music and lyrics by Mark Hollman, is now a Broadway smash. The plot? In a corrupt city beset by a disaster of apocalyptic proportions, water is worth its weight in gold, and pedestrians are forced to comply with a pay-per-pee system. $75–$85. Mon., Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

Off Broadway

Previews and Openings

. . . And Then You Go On: An Anthology of the Works of Samuel Beckett
Bob Jaffe stars as a composite Becket-inspired everyman in his 75-minute solo show. $20. Mon, Wed.–Sat. at 8:30, Sun. at 4. Previews begin 4/24 for a 4/29 opening. • Here, 145 Sixth Ave. (212-647-0202).

A Few Stout Individuals
Michael Grief directs John Guare's new comedy about a dying and destitute man who's offered a fortune for his memoirs. When his conniving family finds out, they scheme to keep the old man alive. $50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Previews begin 4/23 for a 6/12 opening. Through 6/2. • Signature Theatre's Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. (212-244-7529).

House and Garden
Alan Ayckbourn's latest plays have a wonderful gimmick—and London critics swear it works: Two plays, one in the house, one in the garden, unfold simultaneously, as actors shuttle between the two stages. The plot concerns a garden party gone awry and a French actress who loves her liquor. John Tillinger directs. $60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2:30. Previews begin 4/26 for a 5/21 opening. (See box.) • MTC Stages 1 and 2 at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (212-581-1212).

The Murals of Rockefeller Center
Irondale Ensemble stages Jim Niesen's new play about Diego Rivera's clash with John D. Rockefeller over the artist's murals in the RCA Building. $25. Tues.–Sat. at 8. In previews for a 4/24 opening. Through 5/18. • Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave. (718-488-9233).

The Odyssey
Nobel winner Derek Walcott's new stage version of Homer's epic tale, directed by Edward Berkeley. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Previews begin 4/23 for an 5/5 opening. (See box.) • Theatre @ St. Clements, 423 W. 46th St. (212-279-4200).

Ricky Jay: On the Stem
Sleight-of-hand master, author (*Learned Pigs & Fireproof Women*), self-publisher (*Jay's Journal of Anomalies*), and actor (*Boogie Nights, Heist*), Ricky Jay is something of a phenomenon. His 1994 show, *Ricky Jay and His 52 Assistants*, sold out almost instantly, and his new one threatens to do the same. As usual, admirer David Mamet directs. $65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. at 2 and 7, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 5/2 opening. Through 7/14. (See box.) • Second Stage Theatre, 307 W. 43rd St. (212-246-4422).

21 Dog Years: Doing Time @ Amazon.com
Mike Daisey's Fringe hit—a comic look back at the dot-com era—returns. $45. Mon., Wed., and Thurs. at 8, Fri. at 7 and 9, Sat. at 5 and 9, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 5/9 opening. • Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. (212-239-6200).

Ground Rules Except where noted, Broadway shows begin at 8 and are dark Monday. Stars (★) indicate our editors' recommendations. Wallet-watchers should keep in mind the TKTS booths, where discount tickets are available (for that day's performance only) to many Broadway and Off Broadway shows. TKTS booths are at Broadway and 47th St. and in temporary quarters at Bowling Green Park Plaza; call 212-768-1818 for more info. Involved in a production and want to submit details for a possible listing? Call 212-508-0740.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SECOND STAGE.

Now Playing

Andorra
Theatre for a New Audience stages Max Frisch's 1961 drama, a tale about conflicted identities and a community's anti-Semitic bigotry. Liviu Ciulei directs this new translation by *Village Voice* critic Michael Feingold. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Sat. and Sun. at 2. • Lucille Lortel Theatre, 121 Christopher St. (212-239-6200).

★ Blue Man Group: Tubes
Smart silliness, with toilet paper, neon-colored paint, cereal, etc. $55–$65. Tues.–Thurs. at 8, Fri. at 7 and 10, Sat. at 4, 7, and 10, Sun. at 2, 5, and 8. • Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. (212-254-4370).

Blue Surge
Rebecca Gilman's drama, a hit in Chicago, tracks two prostitutes who are arrested in a police sting. Steve Key, Sarah Knowlton, Rachel Miner, and Joe Murphy star. Robert Falls (1999's *Death of a Salesman*) directs. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. • The Public Theater's Anspacher Theater, 425 Lafayette St. (212-239-6200).

Bodas de Sangre (Blood Wedding)/Pilar Rioja
Federico García Lorca's drama./Flamenco legend Pilar Rioja's new show. $25–$40. Call for schedule and other performances in repertory at Repertorio Español. • Gramercy Arts Center, 138 E. 27th St. (212-889-2850).

★ The Carpetbagger's Children
In Horton Foote's new drama, Hallie Foote, Roberta Maxwell, and Jean Stapleton play three wealthy daughters who grew up on the Texas estate of their father, a former Union soldier. $60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Through 6/30. • Lincoln Center's Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (212-239-6200).

Circle
Suzanne Bachner's bicoastal comedy about a strange range of characters, all linked together by sex. $30. Mon. and Tues. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 10:30, Sun. at 5. Through 5/6. • Kraine Theater, 85 E. 4th St. (212-206-1515).

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)
A crash-course through the Bard's works. $25–$55. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2, 5, and 8, Sun. at 4. • Century Center for the Performing Arts, 111 E. 15th St. (212-239-6200).

The Dazzle
Richard Greenberg's drama takes on the eccentric Collyer brothers. $55. Tues–Sat. at 7:30, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. Through 5/12. • Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900).

★ De La Guarda
A raucous show that's part carnival, part rock concert, and almost entirely airborne. $20–$50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Fri. at 10:30, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 7. • Daryl Roth Theatre, 20 Union Square East, at 15th St. (212-239-6200).

The Donkey Show
A wild, loose disco-musical adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* with even looser morals. Cable sex icon Robin Byrd hosts on Wednesdays. $39. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 10:30. • El Flamingo, 547 W. 21st St. (212-307-4100).

Forbidden Broadway 20th Anniversary Celebration
Gerard Alessandrini's newest update of his long-running musical spoof. $49.50–$55. Mon., Tues., Fri., and Sat. at 8:15, Sun. at 3:30 and 7:30, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30. • Douglas Fairbanks Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

The Godfadda Workout
Comedic actor Seth Isler parodies the Coppola classic. $20–$50. Mon., Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sat at 2, Sun. at 3 and 7. • American Place Theater, 111 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).

The Golem
Robert Prosky (*Glengarry Glen Ross*) stars in the 1921 Yiddish classic, directed by Lawrence Sacharow (*Three Tall Women*). $55. Call for schedule. Through 5/12. • M.E.T., 55 Mercer St. (212-239-6200).

Good Time Blues
Genovis Albright and Madame Pat Tandy star in this blues revue. $30. Sat. and Sun. at 3, Mon. at 8. • John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

★ Helen
Tony Kushner directs a new comic drama by Ellen McLaughlin, in which Helen of Troy is zapped into a modern-day Egyptian hotel room, where she paints her nails and awaits news reports of the war she left behind. Johanna Day, Donna Murphy, Denis O'Hare, Phylicia Rashad, and Louise Wilson star. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. • The Public Theater, 425 Lafayette St. (212-239-6200).

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change
They're here. They're straight. Get used to it. A musical revue about heterosexual love. $49.50–$60. Mon., Tues., Fri., and Sat. at 8, Wed. at 2:30, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. • Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

John Gabriel Borkman
The Ibsen Series continues with its penultimate installment, Ibsen's tale about a corrupt financier. Max Montel directs. $15. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3. • Century Center Ballroom Theatre, 111 E. 15 St. (212-279-4200).

Kilt
Jonathan Wilson's comic play about a Scotland-born go-go dancer who returns to his home country for his grandfather's funeral. $30–$35. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 3. • Directors Company, 311 W. 43rd St. (212-206-1515).

★ The Last 5 Years
The young composer-lyricist Jason Robert Brown made his Broadway debut and scored himself a Tony as co-author (with Alfred Uhry) of *Parade*. Now 31, Brown has delivered a terrific musical, in which *Thou Shalt Not*'s Norbert Leo Butz and *Aida*'s Sherie René Scott play an aspiring author and a struggling actress who sing and tell the tale of their flamed-out five-year romance in crisscrossing, toe-tapping narratives. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • Minetta Lane Theater, 18 Minetta Ln. (212-420-8000).

Love, Janis
An enjoyable new bio-musical based on *Love, Janis* by Joplin's sister Laura and performed by a trio of actresses. Orfeh stars. $45–$100. Mon, Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. • Village Theater, 158 Bleecker St. (212-307-4100).

Matthew and Stephen
One 8-year-old boy befriends another, who is very ill, in Jean-Rock Gaudreault's well-reviewed drama, staged by Montreal company Mathieu, Françoise et Les Autres. $10–$30. Call for schedule. Through 4/28. • New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

Mr. Goldwyn
In a bit of inspired casting, comedic actor Alan King plays the contentious Hollywood producer Samuel Goldwyn in this new drama by Marsha Lebby and John Lollos. $65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Promenade Theatre, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. (212-239-6200).

Much Ado About Nothing/Romeo and Juliet
Pearl Theatre stages the classics, in repertory. $28–$35. Call for schedule. • Pearl Theatre Company, 80 St. Marks Pl. (212-598-9802).

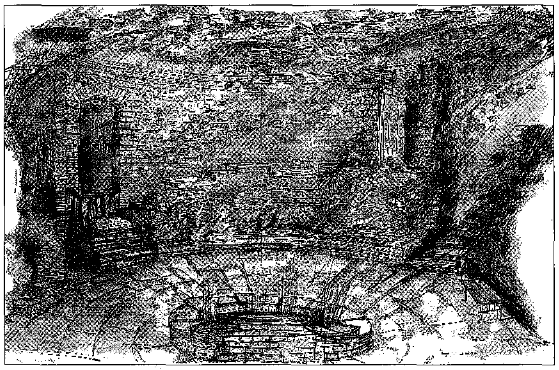
Naked Boys Singing
Just like a regular musical revue, but without pants. $35–$50. Mon., Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, and Sun. at 3 and 7. • Actor's Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. So. (212-239-6200).

Necessary Targets
Eve Ensler's utterly unbelievable drama tracks two American women who travel to Bosnia to help women refugees struggling with the aftermath of war. $60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 3. • Variety Arts Theatre, 110 Third Ave. (212-239-6200).

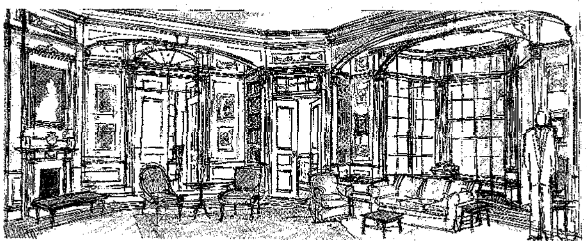
Puppetry of the Penis
An oddly innocent lesson in "the ancient Australian art of genital origami." $29.90–$39.90. Tues.–Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 9:30, Sun. at 7. • John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

Previews

Two-Timer



"The thing is, you have to have two theaters within a minute's walking distance, or it doesn't work," says Alan Ayckbourn, whose two plays opening this week revolve around a wonderful, loopy stunt. **House** and **Garden** are performed simultaneously, one a wild farce set in the yard (the set is pictured, above) and the other a more subdued comedy indoors (below), as part of an integrated whole, with a shared cast that shuttles between the two stages. (To get the full effect, audience members must attend on two nights.) "You could have written them with ten or fifteen minutes in between, so that each actor could have had a cup of coffee before going back into the other play," says Ayckbourn, "but I wanted to make things logistically quite complicated." Performers get just three minutes or so to make it from one stage to the other. Each play begins at the same moment, each curtain falls at the same moment, and the entire cast takes its bows together, alternating stages. "Early on, I had two people with stopwatches marking the time on the bottom of each page of the script," he says. "Then I'd go home and say, *Okay, we can get a quarter of a minute here . . .*" Ayckbourn swears his device is more than just a gimmick—it's a way for him to explore the gap between superficial impressions and informed evaluations. "In *Garden,* Trish is only in the play for about two pages. You might get the impression that she's very unsympathetic and rude, but if you see *House,* you'd reconsider that," he says. "We're all walk-on parts in other people's lives, but for our friends and our families, we're rather more major players, thank God." In previews for a May 21 opening. (See "Off Broadway.") L.H.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN LEE BEATTY.

Previews

Poet Hits a Homer

Nobel laureate Derek Walcott (pictured), whose adaptation of **The Odyssey** opens May 5, has been riffing on Homeric themes throughout his career. His 1990 epic poem *Omeros* retold the legend through the lives of West Indian fishermen and prostitutes, and two years later, the Royal Shakespeare Company premiered his stage adaptation of the story. Now the Caribbean-influenced adaptation, in which a singer named Blind Billy Blue replaces the Greek chorus, has made its appropriately long and arduous journey to Theatre @ St. Clements, where it's currently in previews and directed by Edward Berkeley. (See "Off Broadway.")

Reno: Rebel Without a Pause
Reno transfers her successful solo show, one that was intended to be a vehicle for her rants but quickly became one of the first theatrical performances to incorporate a response to September 11. $40. Mon., Thurs.–Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 5:30. • Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. (212-239-6200).

The Secret Order
Bob Clyman's new drama about a cancer researcher. $30. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • E.S.T., 549 W. 52nd St. (212-247-4982).

Stomp
A boisterous riot of found-object percussion. $29.50–$55. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Orpheum, 126 Second Ave. (212-477-2477).

Surviving Grace
Trish Vradenburg's play about a mother and daughter's fitful reconciliation. $30–$55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7. • Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. (212-307-7171).

The Sweepers
John Picardi's new drama introduces three Italian-American women at the end of WWII in Boston. $35. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Through 5/5. • Urban Stages, 259 W. 30th St. (877-737-3285).

Swimming With Watermelons
A new music theater piece about a post-WWII romance between an American GI and a Japanese woman, by Diane Paulus, Randy Weiner, and Project 400. $15–$45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9, Sun. at 3. • Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. (212-353-0303).

★ The Syringa Tree
Kate Blumberg plays 28 characters in Pamela Gien's superb solo drama about a young girl coming to terms with life in sixties South Africa. It's a surprising and unpredictable, utterly believable and affecting tale of family love and loss amid the violence of apartheid. $49.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Playhouse 91, 316 E. 91st St. (212-307-4100).

Talk
Recording and spoken-word artist Carl Hancock Rux (*Rux Revue, No Black Male Show*) debuts his first full-fledged drama. This Foundry Theatre production is directed by Marion McClinton (*Jitney, Seven Guitars*). $35. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Sun. at 2. Through 4/28. • Public Theater, 425 Lafayette Ave. (800-965-4827).

★ 36 Views
In Naomi Iisuka's new drama, an artist and her friend become embroiled in a controversy surrounding a recently discovered Japanese pillow book. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. • The Public Theater's Newman Theater, 425 Lafayette St. (212-239-6200).

3 Dark Tales
Theatre O's scary brand of physical theater rated rave reviews at London's Barbican Theatre recently. Their dark and comic take on three office mates is directed by Joseph Alford. $20–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • 45 Bleecker Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. (212-307-4100).

Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding
A wedding and reception, with Italian buffet, champagne, and wedding cake. $75–$80. Thurs.–Sun. at 7, Sun. at 2. • St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St., and Vinnie Black's Coliseum, Hotel Edison, 221 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).

Underneath the Lintel
In Glen Berger's new play, a librarian begins a peculiar investigation after discovering a returned book that is 123 years overdue. $40. Tues.–Thurs. and Sat. at 8, Fri. at 7 and 10, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. (212-239-6200).

The Underpants
Steve Martin's adaptation of the Carl Sternheim comedy, in which a man's frets over his wife's fetching looks and newfound suitors. $35. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. (212-677-4210).

Urban Transitions: Loose Blossoms
Ron Milner's drama tracks a midwestern family, as the son begins selling drugs to support his unemployed father. $30. Wed.–Fri. at 7:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Through 5/5. • Harry De Jur Playhouse, 466 Grand St. (212-279-4200).

★ The Vagina Monologues
Eve Ensler's oral history of a body part stitches together testimony from women from all over the world. Through 5/26: Karen Black, Janet Hubert, and Andrea McArdle. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 5, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. • Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

Off-Off Broadway

Attempts on Her Life
Douglas Crimp's suspenseful drama about an enigmatic woman, directed by Steve Cosson. $15. Wed.–Sat. at 7:30. • SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. (212-206-1515).

The Ballad of Phineas P. Gage
A puppetry production about Gage, whose head was pierced by a rod of iron in 1848. $15. Thurs.–Sun. at 7. • Here, 145 Sixth Ave. (212-647-0202).

Finally/Mother of the Bride
In Stephen Belber's Fringe success, Katie Firth plays all of the characters embroiled in a coach's murder./David Mowers reflects on time spent planning weddings for his boyfriends' daughters. $15. Call for schedule. • Blue Heron Arts Center, 121 E. 24th St. (212-560-7284).

Lookin' Cute/Feelin' Cute
A snazzy show by "Gay Pimp" Johnny McGovern. $15. Thurs.–Sun. at 7:30, some late nights. Through 5/12. • P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. (212-477-5288).

★ Maria del Bosco (Sex & Racing Cars: A Sound Opera)
The latest Richard Foreman production tackles horny ballerinas who fall in love with a race car. $15. Tues., Thurs.–Sun. at 8. • Ontological Theater at St. Mark's Church, 131 E. 10th St. (212-533-4650).

The Marriage of Figaro
The Beaumarchais classic comedy, directed by David Fuller. $15–$40. Wed. at 7, Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3. • Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery (212-677-0060).

Measure for Measure
The Acting Shakespeare Company makes its debut. $19. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9. • 45 Below at Bleecker Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. (212-307-4100).

Medea
Classical Theatre of Harlem stages an Alfred Preisser adaptation of the tragedy. $15. Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3. • Harlem School of the Arts Theater, 647 St. Nicholas Ave. (212-539-8828).

Mister
Rent veterans Anthony Rapp and Yassmin Alers star in a new musical set in an urban high school. Book and lyrics by Tony Vellela, music by Misha Piatiagorsky. $15. Sun. at 7, Mon. and Tues. at 8. Through 4/30. • Present Company Theatorium, 198 Stanton St. (212-420-8877).

Monday Night Magic
Internationally known magicians in an intimate setting. $29.50–$32.50. Mon. at 8. • McGinn/Cazale Theater, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. (212-615-6432).

Not in Front of the Baby
A twisted comedy by Stephen Gaydos about a god-fearing Catholic family. $15. Mon. at 7, Thurs.–Sat. at 8. • Flatiron Playhouse, 119 W. 23rd St. (212-414-8181).

Placebo Sunrise
Garvey & Superpants stage their latest oddity. $3–$20. Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 11. Through 5/18. • Pleasure Center, 125 W. 42nd St. (212-726-3054).

The Short, Violent Life of Margie Good
Jimmy Camicia's drama about a woman searching for her birth mother. $10. Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3. • Theater for the New City, 155 First Ave. (212-254-1109).

Spurn
Surreal short plays by Ian Hemenway and Neil Trivedi. $8–$12. Thurs.–Sat. at 8. Through 4/27. • Collective: Unconscious, 145 Ludlow St. (212-358-9276).

Straight Jacket & Tie
Aaron Ginsburg's comedy about three young men and a lot of beer. $15. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7. • Vital Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. (212-592-0129).

Street Theater
Doric Wilson's play about the events that presaged the Stonewall riots. $10. Thurs.–Sat. at 7:30. Through 5/11. • Eagle NYC, 554 W. 28th St. (212-330-7043).

The Tempest
Pulse Ensemble Theatre revives its open-air Shakespearean production indoors. $18. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3. • 74-Seat Theatre, 531 W. 42nd St. (212-695-1596).

These Four Walls
Charlotte Meehan's new comedy. $10–$15. • Dixon Place, 309 E. 26th St. (212-532-1546).

Transatlantica/The Velvet Rut
Kenny Finkle's murder mystery/David Bucci's art world lament. $10. Tues.–Sat. at 9. • Flea, 41 White St. (212-226-0051).

Tumor Brainiowicz
Brooke O'Hara uses puppets to stage this odd work by Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz. $15. Thurs.–Sat. at 10, Sun. at 5:30. • La MaMa E.T.C., 74A E. 4th St. (212-475-7710).

★ Xtravaganza
The Builders Association (*Jet Lag*) pays tribute to four seminal theatrical visionaries—Florenz Ziegfeld, Busby Berkeley, Steele MacKaye, and Loie Fuller—in a large-scale spectacle of light, movement, and sound that marries the styles of these pioneers to the beats and technology of the current club scene. $16–$20. Tues.–Sat. at 8. Through 5/4. • St. Ann's Warehouse, 38 Water St., Brooklyn (718-858-2424).

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PHOTOGRAPH BY MOISE NIKOS/GAMMA.

Art

Edited by Edith Newhall

Galleries

Solos

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

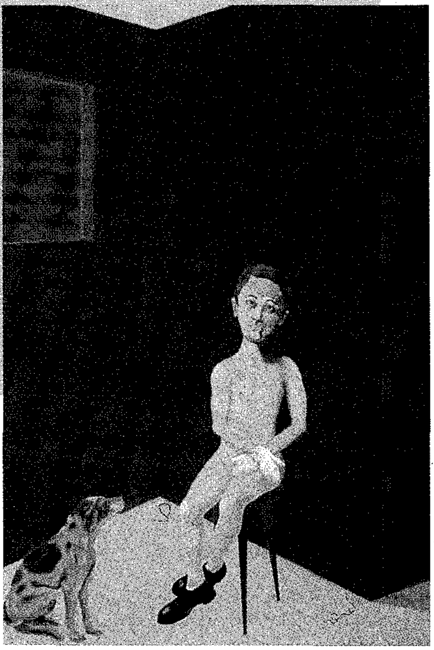
★ Max Beckmann
The first New York exhibition of the artist's sculptures, of which he made only eight, in 35 years, plus a selection of his paintings; through 5/24. • Feigen, 34 E. 69th St. (212-628-0700).

Stuart Davis/Albert Kresch
A group of the artist's late paintings made between 1942 and 1964/Small, intensely colored landscape paintings. Through 5/11. • Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (212-879-6606).

On View

The Annual Report

Since the National Academy of Design's founding in 1825, its annual survey of American art has been a juried show. In other words, committee members pored over submissions from hundreds of hopefuls—and inevitably, every year, the Academy's galleries were crammed to the gills with paintings, sculptures, prints, and drawings. For this year's exhibition, though, the Academy's director, Annette Blaugrund, and its current president, Gregory Amenoff, decided to break with tradition, making the show an invitational affair with a stronger emphasis on architecture. The result: the **177th Annual**, a fresh, broad-minded, and unclaustrophobic exhibition of works by 95 artists and architects of all ages and styles, among them Emma Amos, Tom Friedman, Charles Gwathmey, Jane Hammond, Judy Pfaff, Alexis Rockman, James Siena, Sarah Sze, David True (pictured, *Self-Mastery*, 1998-2000), Bart Voorsanger, Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, and Lisa Yuskavage. (May 1 through June 9; see "Museums.")



★ Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven
Previously unknown assemblages by the New York Dada artist known as "The Baroness," as well as her *Portrait of Berenice Abbott*, on loan from the Museum of Modern Art, and a portrait of her by Theresa Bernstein; through 6/15. (See box.) • Naumann, 22 E. 80th St. (212-472-6800).

Diane Andrews Hall
Multi-panel paintings of clouds and waves that use light, atmosphere, and changing weather patterns to explore the psychology of perception; through 5/11. • Graham, 1014 Madison Ave. (212-535-5767).

Gordon Meier
Intimately scaled paintings that romanticize strip malls, parking lots, motels, and other banalities of the suburban American landscape; 4/25–5/25. • Venardos, 1014 Madison Ave. (212-879-5858).

★ A. R. Penck
Works on paper from the artist's "TM" series, made between 1971 and 1974 and based on his study of information theories and cybernetics; through 5/18. • Werner, 4 E. 77th St. (212-988-1623).

Carol Ross/Ann Wilson
Minimal geometric sculptures/Collages of leaves cut and arranged in grid formations and related paintings. Through 5/18. • Gat, 1100 Madison Ave. (212-327-0441).

Francis A. Silva
Atmospheric Hudson River and coastal New England scenes by a Luminist painter (1835–1886); 4/24–6/28. • Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. (212-744-2300).

57th Street Area

★ Luis Cruiz Azaceta
Abstract paintings in which patterns of beadlike forms loop and intertwine; through 5/11. • Barquet, 41 E. 57th St. (212-644-9090).

Will Barnet
Paintings and prints from 1990 to the present, of subjects drawn from the artist's domestic life in New York and Maine; through 5/18. • Alexandre, 41 E. 57th St. (212-755-2828).

Susana Jaime-Mena
Minimal sculptures that pair contrasting materials, such as wax and lead; through 5/11. • Haime, 41 E. 57th St. (212-888-3550).

Odd Nerdrum/Robert Bauer
Recent figurative paintings by the Norwegian artist known for his dramatic tableaux and use of old-master techniques; through 5/11/Portrait drawings. Through 5/25. • Forum, 745 Fifth Ave. (212-355-4545).

★ Kenneth Noland
Paintings that continue the artist's exploration of the circle motif, but incorporate a wider range of colors than his previous works; through 5/25. • Ameringer Howard Yohe, 20 W. 57th St. (212-445-0051).

★ Tom Otterness
New monumental bronze sculptures inspired by fairy-tale characters; through 5/18. • Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (212-541-4900).

★ Myron Stout
The first New York exhibition devoted to the abstractionist's graphite drawings, all of which remained in his studio at the time of his death, in 1987, at 79, and date from the mid-sixties through the seventies; through 5/18. • Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. (212-397-6780).

SoHo and TriBeCa

★ Francis Bacon
A selection of paintings made by the late British artist between 1950 and 1988; through 5/18. • Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St. (212-274-9300).

Richard Haas
Paintings, prints, and works on paper from the past three decades depicting trompe-l'oeil views of New York City architecture; through 5/31. • Ingbar, 568 Broadway (212-334-1100).

★ Tony Oursler
The first New York exhibition of the artist's drawings, which explore such themes as the supernatural, methods of mass communication, and the history of media technology; through 5/11. • Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. (212-965-0753).

★ Kim Sooja
A Mirror Woman, an installation by a Korean artist who uses mirrors and Korean bedcovers, traditionally used for the newly wedded couple, to comment on love, happiness, wealth, and the illusive quality of these human dreams; through 5/18. • Blum, 99 Wooster St. (212-343-0441).

Paul Waldman
Disquieting paintings of cherubic children with wings, horns, and other animal characteristics in serene, marbled places and related sculptures in cast-bronze or painted porcelain; through 5/11. • Lennon Weinberg, 560 Broadway (212-941-0012).

★ Kumi Yamashita
Portraits and shadow profiles created by rubbing conte crayon on silk paper placed over each sitter's personal credit cards; through 5/11. • Kent, 67 Prince Street (212-966-4500).

Chelsea

Suzanne Anker
New sculpture and ink-jet prints that use high-tech simulation techniques to explore the structures of chromosomes, the butterfly, and the brain; through 5/18. • Universal Concepts, 507 W. 24th St. (212-727-7575).

★ Polly Apfelbaum/Beatriz Milhazes
One large floor sculpture composed of individual pieces of hand-dyed velvet/One large painting composed of images suggesting mandalas, carnival decorations, jewelry, and lace. Through 5/24. • D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. (212-352-9460).

Charles Avery/Roy Kortik
An installation of drawings and sculptures on the theme of the art-museum experience/New sculptures, including animal-attended fountains made from Styrofoam coolers; ceramic nymphs and puppies, and other charming oddities. Through 5/11. • Dee/Glasoe, 545 W. 20th St. (212-924-7545).

Jean-Michel Basquiat
A selection of the artist's paintings on the theme of war; through 5/29. • Spike, 547 W. 20th St. (212-627-4100).

Ground Rules Galleries are generally open Tuesday through Saturday, from between 10 and 11 to between 5 and 6. *Stars (★) indicate our editors' recommendations.*

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN MUSEUM.

Hilary Brace
Charcoal and pastel drawings depicting mysterious terrain illuminated by hidden light sources; through 5/11. • Thorp, 210 Eleventh Ave. (212-691-6565).

★ David Burrows
The first New York solo show of work by this British artist who creates narratives of violent events in sculptures meticulously cut from foam, rubber, and photographs; through 5/11. (See box.) • Taylor, 535 W. 22nd St. (646-230-0992).

Pierre Dorion
Paintings of commonplace objects and places based on the artist's snapshots from his travels; through 5/18. • Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. (212-645-1701).

★ Carroll Dunham
New black-and-white paintings, each of which depicts the same figure in a changing environment of pathos and psychodrama; through 6/1. • Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. (212-206-7100).

Kirsten Geisler
Interactive computer animations of beautiful virtual women and common house flies that blur the boundaries between real and digital space; through 5/18. • Von Lintel, 555 W. 25th St. (212-242-0599).

★ Stefan Kürten
Paintings of tranquil, generic urban and rural scenes that evoke a sense of melancholy; through 5/25. • Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave. (212-367-7474).

Elizabeth McIntosh
Paintings of geometric forms arranged in patterns; through 5/18. • Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. (212-243-5937).

★ Dennis Oppenheim
An unsettling installation that fills the gallery with oversized resin forms of human heads and guns that emit trajectories of light; through 6/1. • Helman, 601 W. 26th St. (212-929-1545).

David Sandlin
Recent paintings in which the artist's mordant humor has brought to bear on themes of fatherhood and mortality; through 5/18. • Mansion, 504 W. 22nd St. (212-645-7656).

★ Julião Sarmento
Paintings, works on paper, and a slide installation (in collaboration with Arto Lindsay) that explore the complexities of interpersonal relationships; through 5/25. • Kelly, 528 W. 29th St. (212-239-1181).

★ Richard Serra
A selection of the artist's "Prop" sculptures dating from 1969 to 1987, works of lead or steel formed as plates, blocks, bars, and rolls; through 5/26. • Van de Weghe, 521 W. 23rd St. (212-929-6633).

Harold Stevenson
Rarely exhibited "New Realist" paintings from the sixties and seventies and a new four-panel painting on the theme of September 11; through 5/25. • Algus, 511 W. 25th St. (212-242-6282).

Carol Szymanski
Paintings that explore the alphabet as a storehouse of pictorial possibilities; through 5/25. • Wimmer, 526 W. 26th St. (212-206-0006).

★ Tom Otterness
Recent bronze sculptures of rotund figures from the artist's "Free Money" series; through 5/18. • Marlborough Chelsea, 211 W. 19th St. (212-463-86634).

★ Sue Williams
New gestural abstract paintings in which the artist has used a wider brushstroke and gradations of color within each movement; through 5/18. • 303, 525 W. 22nd St. (212-255-1121).

Other

Kim Dae Won
Ink-and-color paintings that are distillations of the Korean artist's experiences of the countryside; through 5/21. • Tenri Society, 43A W. 13th St. (212-645-2800), Mon.-Thurs. 12-8, Sat. 12-5.

Ron Shuebrook/Charles Hewlings
Architectonic charcoal drawings from the past ten years/Open-form, wood and steel sculptures that evoke modernist paintings and architecture. Through 5/18. • New York Studio School, 8 W. 8th St. (212-673-6466).

Group Shows

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

★ Baumgold
"Hair Stories," images of hair in painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, found objects, and *memento mori*, by Dunning, Lopez, Lutz, Marten, Pfeiffer, Yoshida, Waters, Winokur, others; through 5/24. • 74 E. 79th St. (212-861-7338).

Cook
Works in various media depicting botanical images, by Cornell, Kelly, Koons, Yuskavage, Warhol, others; through 5/23. • 1063 Madison Ave. (212-737-3550).

★ Ubu
A selection of rare lithographic propaganda posters produced in Germany during the period of the early Weimar Republic, including works by Cay, Klein, Pechstein, Langenborg, Zietara, others; through 5/18. • 16 E. 78th St. (212-794-4444).

Winston Wachter Mayer
Horses depicted in various media—including paintings, photographs, drawings and sculpture—by Andoe, Butterfield, Delacroix, Degas, Rothenberg, Traylor, others; through 5/18. • 39 E. 78th St. (212-327-2526).

57th Street Area

PaineWebber
Prints by artists associated with the Art Students League between 1901 and 2001, among them Barnet, Bellows, Dehner, Sloan, Sternberg, others; through 6/21. • 1285 Sixth Ave. (212-713-2885).

St. Etienne
"Workers of the World," modern images of labor by Gropper, Liebermann, Pissarro, Rivera, others; through 6/15. • 24 W. 57th St. (212-245-6734).

★ Zabriskie
"Kiki of Montparnasse," a celebration of the artist's model and muse, including paintings by Kiki and artworks and photographs portraying her by Brassai, Moïse Kisling, Francis Picabia, Man Ray, and others; through 5/24. • 41 E. 57th St. (212-752-1223).

SoHo and TriBeCa

Apexart
"The Passions of the Good Citizen," works by seven artists exploring the power of advertising in our culture; through 5/11. • 291 Church St. (212-431-5270).

Chelsea

Indo Center
Paintings by five contemporary artists from Pakistan who draw on a wide variety of sources and traditions; through 6/29. • 530 W. 25th St. (212-462-4221).

Photography

Shelby Lee Adams
Recent images of the photographer's friends and relatives in the Appalachian Mountains of eastern Kentucky; through 6/1. • Milo, 552 W. 24th St. (212-414-0370).

★ Dawoud Bey
Recent large-format color portraits of minority subjects; through 5/31. • Gorney Bravin + Lee, 534 W. 26th St. (212-352-8372).

Lucinda Devlin
Works from the American photographer's "Pleasure Ground" series begun in the late seventies and showing the interiors of indoor sports facilities, tanning salons, and fantasy motels; through 5/11. • Rodgers/9W, 529 W. 20th St. (212-4414-9810).

Janieta Eyre
Images of make-believe mutant mothers; through 5/25. • Cristinerose, 529 W. 20th St. (212-206-0297).

Andrea Frank
Images of children involved in group activities that are reshot, cropped, and manipulated versions of existing images dating from the thirties through the seventies; through 5/25. • Marvelli, 526 W. 26th St. (212-627-3363).

★ ICP
"Rise of the Picture Press: Photographic Reportage in Illustrated Magazines, 1918–1939," approximately 130 examples of rare American and European publications, mostly from the collection of ICP; through 6/16. • "Dream Street: W. Eugene Smith's Pittsburgh Photographs," a photographic portrait of Pittsburgh created between 1955 and 1957; through 6/16. • 1133 Sixth Ave. (212-857-0045), Tues.-Thurs. 10-5, Fri. 10-8, Sat. and Sun. 10-6; $9, students and seniors $6.

★ Charles Jones
Photographs of fruits, vegetables, and flowers that were probably taken by the British gardener in the late 1890s; through 5/11. • Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. (212-838-0333).

David Malin
Color and black-and-white astronomical photographs revealing distant objects that cannot be seen by the human eye; through 5/25. • Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. (212-750-7070).

★ Ray K. Metzker/Dodo Jin Ming
New unique composites assembled from the photographer's vintage prints from the sixties/Black-and-white photographs of turbulent seas that evoke the paintings of Turner and Homer. Through 6/15. • Miller, 20 W. 57th St. (212-397-3930).

★ Boris Mikhailov
Unflinching images of the everyday lives of the poor in the Soviet Union, during Communist rule and after; through 5/11. • Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (212-759-7999).

Marian Roth
Color pinhole photographs of houses in landscapes; through 5/18. • Bateman, 560 Broadway (212-227-1431).

★ Eve Sonneman
A survey of the artist's paired photographs from the late sixties to the present; through 5/11. • Silverstein, 504 W. 22nd St. (212-627-3930).

Weegee
Photographs of New York from the forties and fifties; through 5/17. • De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. (212-327-1482).

Museums

American Craft Museum
"Objects for Use: Handmade by Design." Functional works by 200 artists, among them Aroner, Hotchkiss, McKie, Rice, Teraki, Walden; through 4/28. • 40 W. 53rd St. (212-956-3535), daily 10-6, Thurs. 10-8 (pay what you wish 6-8); $7.50, $4 students and seniors.

American Folk Art Museum
★ "Darger: The Henry Darger Collection at the American Folk Art Museum." The museum's first presentation of 26 large-scale, rarely seen paintings, plus drawings, original manuscripts, books, and sketches from the artist's archives; through 6/23. • "American Radiance: The Ralph Esmerian Gift to the American Folk Art Museum." Paintings, sculpture, pottery, textiles, furniture, and scrimshaw recently donated to the museum by the folk-art collector; through 6/2. • 45 W. 53rd St. (212-977-7170), Tues.-Sun. 10-6 (Fri. to 8); $9, $5 students and seniors.

American Museum of Natural History
"Baseball As America." A study of how the sport reflects our culture, with more than hundreds of artifacts borrowed from the Hall of Fame; through 8/18. • "The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter." An annual exhibit featuring 400 to 500 live butterflies from Central, South, and North America; through 5/27. • Central Park West at 79th St. (212-769-5100); daily 10-5:45 (on Fri., Rose Center is open to 8:45 for weekly jazz concerts); $10 suggested contribution, $7.50 students and seniors, $6 children.

Asia Society and Museum
★ "The New Way of Tea." A two-part exhibition running concurrently at the Asia Society and Museum and the Japan Society, examining the contemporary Japanese tea ceremony through traditional and experimental environments, utensils, and performances; through 5/19. • "Through Afghan Eyes: A Culture in Conflict, 1987–1992." Images by Afghan photographers and cameramen documenting the closing years of Soviet rule and the gradual collapse of civil society in Afghanistan, drawn from the archives of the Afghan

Media Resource Center in Peshawar, Pakistan; through 8/11. • 725 Park Ave. (212-288-6400), Tues.-Sun. 11-6 (Fri. 11-9, free admission 6-9); $7, $5 students and seniors.

Bronx Museum of the Arts

★ "Manicurated: A Project by Judi Werthein." A site-specific, mixed-media installation that transforms the exhibition space into a fully equipped nail salon in which visitors are treated to free manicures by professional manicurists and asked to select from among ten works in the museum's permanent collection for their personalized "nail art" design; through 5/26. • 1040 Grand Concourse, the Bronx (718-681-6000), Wed. noon-9, Thurs.-Sun. noon-6; $5, $3 students and seniors, Wed. free.

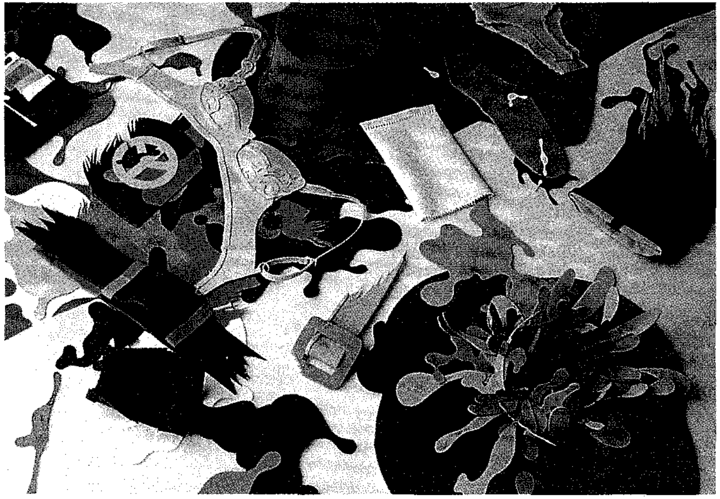
Brooklyn Museum of Art

"Star Wars: The Magic of Myth." Original artwork, props, models, costumes, and characters used to create the *Star Wars* trilogy, as well as objects from *Star Wars*: Episode I, *The Phantom Menace*; through 7/7. • "Jewish Life in Ancient Egypt." Ancient Aramaic papyri revealing Egyptian life during Dynasty 27 (525–402 B.C.), the period of Persian rule in Egypt and the Near East; through 5/12. • 200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000), Wed.-Fri. 10-5, Sat. 11-6 (till 11 P.M. on the first Sat. of every month), Sun. 11-6; $6, $3 students and seniors.

Talent

Chaos Theory

In London, where he's been having solo shows and collaborating with the likes of DJ Simpson and the team of Bob and Roberta Smith, **David Burrows** was a finalist for last year's Beck's Futures Award. Here, for his first solo New York show, at Frederieke Taylor Gallery, Burrows has created a sprawling installation of deftly cut foam and rubber, *Modern Domestic Disasters*, a Pop-ish, floppy dramatization of an interior under siege. (Through May 12; see "Galleries: Solos—Chelsea.")



China Institute

"Circles of Reflection: The Carter Collection of Chinese Bronze Mirrors." More than 90 mirrors dating from the Warring States period (480–221 B.C.). to the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), from the Carter Collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art; through 6/2. • 125 E. 65th St. (212-744-8181), Mon., Wed., Fri., 10-5, Tues. and Thurs. 10-8, Sat. 10-5, Sun. 1-5; $3, $2 students and seniors.

Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution

★ "Russel Wright: Creating American Lifestyle." A retrospective of the American designer's work, including examples of his dinnerware, furniture, appliances, textiles, and interiors; through 9/15. • 2 E. 91st St. (212-849-8300), Wed.-Sat. 10-5, Sun. 12-5, Tues. 10-9 (5-9, free admission); $8, $3 students and seniors.

Dia Center for the Arts

★ "Mapping the Studio I (Fat Chance John Cage)." A new large-scale video installation by Bruce Nauman that records the nocturnal activity in the artist's studio of his cat and an infestation of mice during the summer of 2000; through 6/16. • "Alfred Jensen: *Concordance*." Key paintings by the Guatemalan-born Danish artist, including his final artistic statement, *Great Pyramid*, which is on public exhibition for the first time; through 6/16. • "Jorge Pardo and Gilberto Zorio: *Reverb*." The former's redesign of Dia's bookshop, lobby, and gallery and the latter's *Microfonia*, a sound work first created in 1969; through 6/16. • "Diana Thater: *Knots + Surfaces*." An environment of layered video projections and clustered monitors that interacts with the open space of Dia's third-floor gallery; through 6/16. • 548 W. 22nd St. (212-989-5566), Wed.-Sun. 12-6; $6, $3 students and seniors.

Frick Collection

1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700); Tues.-Sat. 10-6, Sun. 1-6; $10, $5 students and seniors; children under 10 not admitted.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

★ "Brazil: Body and Soul." A survey of artistic production in Brazil from the seventeenth century to the present; through 5/29. • ★ "Rachel Whiteread: Transient Spaces." Two new large-scale mixed media sculptures by the British artist that were cast from her new home and studio in London and embody its generic post-war architecture; through 6/5. • 1071 Fifth Ave., at 88th St. (212-423-3500), Sun.-Wed. 9-6, Fri. and Sat. 9-8 (Fri. 6-8, pay what you wish), closed Thurs.; $12, $8 students and seniors.

Japan Society

★ "The New Way of Tea." A two-part exhibition running concurrently at the Japan Society and the Asia Society and Museum, examining the contemporary Japanese tea ceremony through traditional and experimental environments, utensils, and performances; through 5/19. • 333 E. 47th St. (212-832-1155), Tues.-Fri. 11-6, Sat. and Sun. 11-5; $5, $3 students and seniors.

Jewish Museum

★ "New York: Capitol of Photography." Color and black-and-white photographs of the city taken over the past century by 60 photographers, among them Abbott, Bourke-White, DeCarava, Evans, Klein, Levitt, Marks, Parks, Plachy, Winogrand; 4/28–9/2. • "Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art." Works by thirteen contemporary artists who use Third Reich imagery to explore the nature of evil; through 6/30. • "An Artist's Response to Evil: "We Are Not the Last" by Zoran Music; through 6/30. • 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (212-423-3200), Mon., Tues., Wed. 11-5:45; Thurs. 11-8 (Thurs. after 5, pay what you wish), Fri. 11-3, Sun. 10-5:45; $8, $5.50 students and seniors.

Metropolitan Museum of Art

★ "Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence." The first major loan exhibition of tapestries in the United States in 25 years and the first extensive survey of tapestry production between 1460 and 1560, featuring some 45 of the greatest tapestries of the period, as well as preparatory drawings and cartoon fragments; through 6/19. • ★ "Orazio and Artemisia Gentileschi: Father and Daughter Painters in Baroque Italy." Approximately 50 paintings by the former, a follower of Caravaggio who become court painter to England's Charles II, and 35 by his daughter, the first woman artist known to have supported herself from her work and the subject of two biographical novels and a film; through 5/12. • ★ "Surrealism: Desire Unbound." The first major survey of Surrealism in more than twenty years, featuring more than 300 paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs, and films dating from 1924 to more recent years; through 5/12. • ★ "Splendid Isolation: Art of Easter Island." The first American exhibition devoted to the Polynesian art of Easter Island, featuring objects dating from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries; through 8/4. • "Bill Viola: The Quintet of Remembrance." A color-video installation inspired by the artist's study of late-medieval and early-renaissance paintings; through 5/5. • "Treasures From a Lost Civilization: Ancient Chinese Art From Sichuan." Recently excavated sculptures, bronze vessels, jade carvings, and other relics dating from the thirteenth century B. C. to the third century A. D.; through 6/16. • 1000 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (212-879-5500); Tues.-Thurs. and Sun. 9:30-5:30, Fri. and Sat. 9:30-9; $10 contribution, $5 students and seniors. The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park (212-923-3700); Tues.-Sun. 9:30-4:45 (closes at 5:15 between April and September); $10, $5 students and seniors.

Morgan Library

★ "Pierre Matisse and His Artists." An exhibition examining the role of the late Pierre Matisse and his former New York gallery, the Pierre Matisse Gallery, through the works of the artists he promoted between 1931 and 1989, among them Balthus, Jean Dubuffet, Loren MacIver, Joan Míro, and Georges Rouault; through 5/19. • 29 E. 36th St. (212-685-0008), Tues.-Thurs. 10:30-5, Fri. 10:30-8, Sat. 10:30-6, Sun. 12-6; $8, $6 students and seniors.

El Museo del Barrio

★ "Frida Kahlo, Diego Rivera, and Twentieth-Century Mexican Art: The Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection." A nationally touring exhibition of Mexican modernist art from the collection of the late cinematic mogul and his wife, including works by Carrington, Kahlo, Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros, others; through 9/8. • 1230 Fifth Ave. (212-831-7272), Wed.-Sun. 11-5; $5, $3 students and seniors (free admission Thurs. from 5-8).

Museum for African Art

"Bamana: The Art of Existence in Mali." Sculptures, headdresses, masks, puppets, and other objects made by the Bamana people of Mali; through 7/28. • 593 Broadway (212-966-1313), Tues.-Fri. 10:30-5:30, Sat. and Sun. noon-6; $5, $2.50 students, seniors, and children.

Museum of Modern Art

★ "Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting." The first New York retrospective of the German artist's paintings, including 188 canvases completed since 1962 that demonstrate his mastery of such genres as gestural abstraction, landscape, and portraiture; through 5/21. • ★ "Life of the City." Photographs of New York from the museum's collection and by ordinary New Yorkers and visitors, whose photographs will be rotated throughout the the course of the exhibition to accommodate as many submissions as possible (submissions from the public will only be accepted in person at the museum during public hours); through 5/21. • ★ "The Russian Avant-Garde Book, 1910–1934." The most comprehensive exhibition ever devoted to the Russian avant-garde book, featuring some 300 volumes representing all the significant artistic developments of the period, and including works by Natalia Goncharova, El Lissitzky, Kazimir Malevich, and others; through 5/21. • "Projects: Laylah Ali." A presentation of this artist's first artist's book, comprising her signature cartoon-style gouache paintings of attenuated figures; through 5/21. • 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480); Sat.-Tues., Thurs. 10:30-5:45, Fri. 10:30-8:15 (4:30-8:15 pay what you wish), closed Wed.; $12, $8.50 students and seniors.

Museum of the City of New York

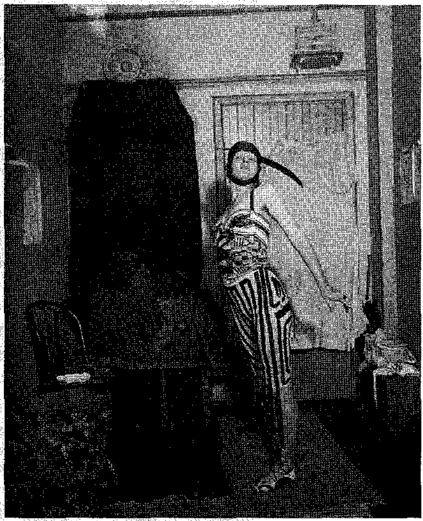
"Brotherhood: In Strength and Sorrow—Images of the FDNY," a photographic tribute to the firefighters who lost their lives in the September 11 tragedy, fea-

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF FREDERIEKE TAYLOR GALLERY.

Retrospective

The Baroness of Dada

Even as part of the New York Dada group, the **Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven** (1874–1927) stood out. Besides wearing black lipstick, teaspoon earrings, plastic-shower-curtain-ring bracelets, and postage stamps on her face, the tall, thrice-married German émigré could be seen strolling the streets of New York in her tomato-soup-can bra or with a birdcage on her head, live canary included. "The Baroness," as she was known, was also a sculptor, painter, poet, and inspiration to Berenice Abbott, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams, among others. "She was one of the 'characters,' one of the 'terrors' of the district which cuts below Minetta Lane and above Eighteenth Street to the West," wrote her first biographer, Djuna Barnes. "People were afraid of her because she was undismayed about the facts of life—any of them—all of them." A new, more exhaustive look into the Baroness's life will arrive in bookstores next month (Irene Gammel's fascinating *Baroness Elsa: Gender, Dada, and Everyday Modernity;* MIT Press; $39.95). Until then, fans of America's first performance-body-assemblage artist can see her works and paintings, as well as portraits of her by the late American painter Theresa Bernstein, at Francis M. Naumann Fine Art. The centerpiece, without question, is a life-size mannequin displaying a Baroness-designed outfit re-created by the costume designer Pascale Ouattara. (Through June 15; see "Galleries: Solos—Madison Avenue and Vicinity.") E.N.



turing images from the book of the same title as well as images that have not been previously published; through 6/2. • *The Little Red Lighthouse and the Great Gray Bridge*: Illustrations by Lynd Ward." Illustrations from the 1942 children's book that were recently given to the museum; through 4/28. • 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (212-534-1672), Wed.-Sat. 10-5, Sun. 1-5; $5 suggested contribution, $4 students and seniors.

National Academy of Design
★ "177 Annual: An Invitational Exhibition." The debut of New York's oldest annual juried survey of American Art, begun in 1826, as an invitational survey, featuring works in various media by 95 artists; 5/1–6/9. (See box.) • 1083 Fifth Ave. (212-369-4880), Wed., Thurs. noon-5, Fri. 10-6, Sat. and Sun. 10-5; $4.50-$8; students and seniors.

Neue Galerie
★ "Oskar Kokoschka: Early Portraits from Vienna and Berlin, 1909–1914." An exhibition marking the first time the Austrian Expressionist's early portraits have been shown together, including portraits of Adolf Loos, Alma Mahler, and others; through 6/10. • 1048 Fifth Ave. (212-628-6200), Fri. 11-9, Sat., Sun., Mon. 11-6; $10, $7 students and seniors.

New Museum of Contemporary Art
★ "Wim Delvoye's Cloaca." An elaborate, room-size installation that replicates the human digestive system; through 4/28. • "Marlene Dumas: Name No Names." Eighty figurative works on paper by this Amsterdam-based artist known for her frank drawings of human figures and faces; through 6/2. • 583 Broadway (212-219-1222), Tue.-Sun. noon-6, Thurs. noon-8 ($3 admission Thurs. 6-8); $6, $3 artists, students, and seniors.

New York Public Library
★ "Victorians, Moderns, and Beats: New in the Berg Collection, 1994–2001." Manuscripts, books, notebooks, photographs, and other archival materials of E. M. Forster, Henry James, Jack Kerouac, Sylvia Plath, W. B. Yeats, and other writers acquired by the library's Berg Collection of English and American Literature over the past seven years; 4/26–7/27. • Fifth Ave. and 42nd St. (212-869-8089), Mon. 10-6, Tues. and Wed. 11-7:30, Thurs.-Sat. 10-6; free.

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts
"Capturing Nureyev: James Wyeth Paints the Dancer." More than 35 drawings and paintings of the dancer by his friend James Wyeth, and photographs and designs from the Jerome Robbins Dance Division of the New York Public Library; through 5/25. • 40 Lincoln Center Plaza (212-870-1630), Mon. and Thurs. noon-8, Tues., Wed., Fri., and Sat. noon-6; free.

New-York Historical Society
★ "Building on the Flatiron: The Centenary of a New York Icon (1902–2002)." Photographs, drawings, paintings, prints, souvenirs, and ephemera from the society's collection relating to one of New York's oldest and most unusual skyscrapers; 4/23-9/1. • ★ "The Games We Played: American Board and Table Games From the Liman Collection." More than 150 examples of board games dating from the end of the Civil War through the first decade of the twentieth century; through 1/5/03 • ★ "Ralph Fasanella's America." A retrospective of paintings by the folk artist and labor activist (1914–1997), a second-generation Italian–American who was born New York City; through 7/14. • "Family Matters: Century-Old New York Businesses." Documents and artifacts from ten long-lived New York City firms, among them Modell's Sporting Goods, ArtKraft Strauss Sign Company, and Rambusch Decorating Studios; through 4/28. • 2 W. 77th St. (212-873-3400); Tues.-Sun. 11-5; $5, $3 seniors and children.

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center
"The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945–1994." A survey of African culture through art, film, photography, graphics, architecture, music, literature, and theater, featuring works by 55 artists from 22 countries; through 5/5. • 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084), Wed.-Sun. noon-6; $5 suggested donation.

Queens Museum of Art
"Rom of Ridgewood." Photographs of gypsy communities in Queens by Yale Strom; through 7/7. • "In the Flow: Artists From the Living Museum." Works by artists who have worked at the Living Museum, a 40,000-square-foot art studio and gallery that provides space and support for the mentally ill and is part of the Creedmoor Psychiatric Center in Queens Village; through 7/7. • New York City Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Queens (718-592-9700), Tues.-Fri. 10-5, Sat. and Sun. noon-5; $5, $2.50 students and seniors.

Studio Museum in Harlem
★ "Black Romantic: The Figurative Impulse in Contemporary African–American Art." Paintings and drawings by 30 artists living in the United States whose imagery represents African-American subjects in contemporary settings and scenes; 4/24–6/23. • 144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500), Wed., Thurs., Sat., and Sun. noon-6, Fri. noon-8; $5, $3 students and seniors.

Whitney Museum of American Art
★ "2002 Biennial." The largest Whitney Biennial exhibition since 1981, presenting the works of 113 artists and collaborative teams within the museum and outdoors, in Central Park; through 5/26. • ★ "Dancer: 1999 Nudes by Irving Penn." An exhibition of the photographer's recent series of nudes of the dancer Alexandra Beller that is concurrent with an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art of his nudes from 1949 and 1950; through 5/12. • 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St. (212-570-3676); Tues.-Thurs., Sat., Sun. 11-6, Fri. 1-9 (pay what you wish every Fri. 6-9); $10, $8 students, seniors, and groups of fifteen or more.

Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris
★ "Five by Five: Contemporary Artists on Contemporary Art." Recent works by Reed Anderson, Rina Banerjee, Susan Graham, Ryan Humphrey, and Larry Krone shown alongside works from the Whitney's permanent collection by Mike Kelley, Donald Lipski, Charles Ray, Tom Sachs, and Chris Wool; through 7/5. • 120 Park Ave. (917-663-2550), Mon.-Fri. 11-6 (Thurs. till 7:30); free.

Auctions

Christie's
4/23 at 10: "Nineteenth Century European Art including Barbizon, Realist, and French Landscape Paintings." On view from 4/18. 4/24 at 10 and 2: "Nineteenth Century Furniture, Sculpture and Ceramics." On view from 4/20. 4/25 at 10: "Important American Paintings, Drawings, and Sculpture." On view from 4/20. 4/25 at 10 and 4/26 at 10 and 2: "Fine and Rare Wines." On view from 4/21. 4/29 at 2: "American Indian Art and Western Memorabilia." On view from 4/23. 4/30 at 10 and 2: "Fine Jewels." On view from 4/25. 5/1 at 10 and 2: "Prints." On view from 4/27. • 20 Rockefeller Plaza (212-636-2000).

Doyle
4/30 at 10: "Books, Autographs, and Motion Picture Memorabilia." On view from 4/27. 4/30 following "Books" auction: "Old Master, Modern, and Contemporary Prints." On view from 4/27. 5/1 at 10: "Fine Furniture, Decorations, and Paintings." On view from 4/27. • 175 E. 87th St. (212-427-2730).

Phillips de Pury & Luxembourg
4/25 at 10:30: "The French Eye: Modernist Style and Design." On view from 4/19. • 3 W. 57th St. (212-940-1200).

Sotheby's
4/24 at 10:15. "Nineteenth-Century European Art." On view from 4/19. 4/24 at 7 and 4/25 at 10:15: "Magnificent Jewels from the Estate of Janice H. Levin." On view from 4/20. 4/25 at 11 and 2: "Magnificent Jewels." On view from 4/19. 4/25 at 2: "European Furniture and Decorations from the Estate of Janice H. Levin." On view from 4/19. 4/26 at 10:15 and 2: "Arcade Jewelry." On view from 4/20. • 1334 York Ave., at 72nd St. (212-606-7000).

Swann Galleries
4/25 at 10:30: "Early Printed Books." On view from 4/21. 5/1 at 4: "100 Important Old Master Prints." On view from 4/27. • 104 E. 25th St. (212-254-4710).

PHOTOGRAPH BY BETTMAN/CORBIS.

Restaurants

Edited by Robin Raisfeld
& Rob Patronite

New and Noteworthy

★ Alias Restaurant
The owners of 71 Clinton Fresh Food and aKa Cafe have tripled their presence on the block with this casually sophisticated bistro. It's closer to 71 in food and mood, and offers top-notch service, a quirky wine list, and an equally inventive menu featuring dishes like skate fish cakes, a chicken-fried portabello, a flawless hanger steak, and, in tribute to a fading Lower East Side industry, a pickle-plate appetizer. • 76 Clinton St. (212-505-5011). (M)

Alma
A stylish Mexican restaurant on a gritty Carroll Gardens stretch that's fast becoming another Brooklyn restaurant row. Chef Gary Jacobson's (Zarela) menu spans all the requisite spicy stuff—from mashed-to-order guacamole to mole poblano—but emphasizes seafood like striped bass wrapped in hoja santa leaf. Come summer, when the outdoor upper deck is completed, quaff a margarita alfresco with a lovely view of Brooklyn piers and the Manhattan skyline. • 187 Columbia St. (718-643-5400). (M)

★ BB Sandwich Bar
What the Doughnut Man is to doughnuts, what the Soup Nazi is to soup, what Melampo is to soppressata sandwiches, that's what Gary Thompson wants to be to cheese steaks—not so much a didactic monomaniac as simply someone who's perfected his craft. We think he's done better than that: His unfettered kaiser-roll-take on the Philly with four-hour marinated onions and terrific housemade hot-pepper relish might just surpass the classic version. • 120 W. 3rd St. (212-473-7500). (I)

Blue Smoke
Danny Meyer, sultan of sophisticated dining, has transformed the former 27 Standard into a much more rough-hewn establishment with a woody barroom full of high-backed booths, a skylit dining room, recession-friendly prices, and, most significant, a pair of Missouri-made pit smokers. The menu goes whole hog, from pulled pork and hot links to baby-back and spare ribs. Meyer clearly plumbed his St. Louis childhood for specialties like toasted ravioli and Fitz's root beer. • 116 E. 27th St. (212-447-7733). (M)

Bonita
The same folks who turned a nondescript 1927 diner into Williamsburg's bustling Diner opened this cantina four blocks away, in a former Latino lunch counter that they remodeled in their trademark preservationist style (lots of tiles, low light, salvaged counter stools). The Oaxacan chef serves up cheese-dusted corn on the cob, cactus salad, chiles rellenos, and the soft tacos he made famous at Diner's staff meals. • 338 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn (718-384-9500). (I-M)

Cafe Doré
What Smith Street has lost in crêpes, it's more than gained in roti. That's one of the Caribbean specialties of Cafe Doré, a spare but cozy nook that's moved into the former Crêpe Factory space. The fab flatbread is chewy and delicious, perfect for mopping up a savory chicken-curry stew. Even better is a zingy jerk chicken redolent of allspice and ginger. There's also oxtail, steamed snapper, curried coconut shrimp, and house-made drinks. • 270 Smith St., Brooklyn (718-246-0505). (I)

Café Sabarsky
Museum Mile is full of museum cafés, but none quite like this elegant evocation of a Viennese-style kaffeehaus at Ronald Lauder's Neue Galerie New York. The artistic sensibility permeates the café, with its reproductions of Josef Hoffmann sconces, Adolf Loos bentwood chairs, and Otto Wagner fabrics. And the theme continues with tortes (Sacher and Linzer), Bavarian ham for breakfast, and cod strudel for lunch. • 1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-288-0665). (M)

Calle Nueve
David Ruggerio has done a steakhouse, a brasserie, several fancy French restaurants, and, most recently, a sushi parlor. The man likes to keep busy. His latest project is Calle Nueve, or "Ninth Street," in the newly renovated Marylou's space. The contemporary-Mexican menu ranges from shrimp seviche with roasted cactus to smoky peanut mole with grilled quail. And, for those who miss the boozy late-night scene at Marylou's, frozen margaritas and "tequinis." • 21 West 9th St. (212-95-0600). (M)

Carne
Despite the name, the meat-and-potatoes menu, and the telltale presence of creamed spinach, Carne's owners don't want you to think of their restaurant as a steakhouse. What separates it from the sparsely populated uptown herd is the updated diner design, and the rowdy rubberneckers' scene on the elevated bar. But please, don't call it a meat market. • 2737 Broadway, at 105th St. (212-663-7010). (M)

Chango
The restaurant monopoly that owns four spots on one block of Park Avenue South—L'Express, Sushi Samba, City Crab, and Duke's—has found another culinary niche to fill. This colorful cantina with swooping dropped-ceiling panels, coyote fencing, and a perimeter of raised booths, aims to be a neighborhood pit-stop for tacos, chile-rubbed chicken, and that great social lubricant the frozen margarita. • 239 Park Ave. So., near 20th St. (212-477-1500). (M)

Ground Rules These listings are a selective guide to the city's restaurants, some *New York* advertisers among them. Stars (★) indicate our critics' recommendations. The price guide, admittedly imperfect, is as follows: (E) = expensive; (M) = moderate; (I) = inexpensive. Restaurants listed accept all major credit cards, except where noted; ($) = cash only; "AE only" indicates that American Express is the only accepted card.

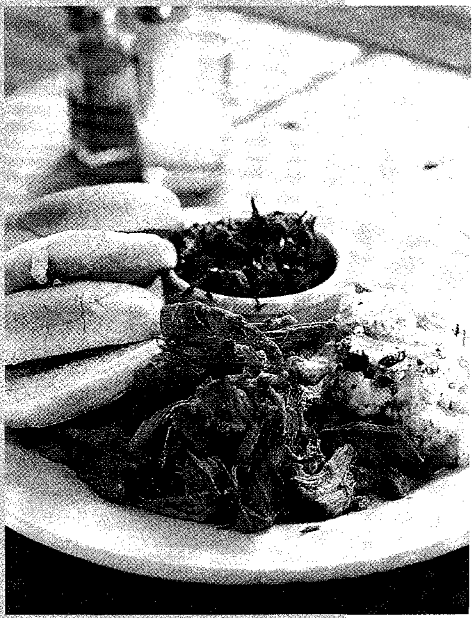
Chateau
Supermodels, rejoice. The nightlife impresarios who've taken over the Leo-haunted premises that used to be Moomba are undoubtedly expecting to inherit some of its celebrity appeal. (Hence, the VIP bathroom.) To fuel the foreseeable frenzy, there's tapas, and to go with the chalet theme, fondue pots built into custom-made tables. • 133 Seventh Ave. So. (212-337-0777). (M)

Cinnabar
A high-style Asian restaurant that falls somewhere between Shun Lee Palace and Ruby Foo's on the culinary-concept map. To go with the celadon-canvas-covered chairs, the cinnamon walls, and the wispy floral displays is chef Vincent Cheng, who's cooked in Hong Kong and L.A. He's making it hard for indecisive diners, with a 150-item menu of Cantonese, Hunan, and Sichuan dishes. • 235 W. 56th St. (212-399-1100). (M-E)

★ craftbar
With only three daily entrées—one fish, one meat, and one pasta—craftbar might be Tom Colicchio and chef Marco Canora's laid-back answer to those still anxiety-

The Underground Gourmet

Smoking Allowed



Danny "Blue Smoke" Meyer isn't the only city slicker with barbecue on the brain. Ron Crismon, the chef-owner of **Bubby's** in TriBeCa, recently returned from a Kerouackian 'cue crusade of his own, where he toured and tasted his way through Texas, Tennessee, Arkansas, and Tupelo. (It's a wonder he and Meyer didn't cross paths in some piggy park along the way and trade smoking tips for Tums.) Although Crismon has served ribs before, he admits they were a pale imitation of the real thing. "Before the trip," he says, "I didn't even know what barbecue was. I thought it was Dallas BBQ." An epiphany came at a Texas brisket shack: "I walked into the place and was brought to my knees, weeping." Still, Crismon's biggest score was closer to home: After some sweet-talking, buttering-up, and outright begging, an Arkansan friend of a friend of his Arkansas-born fiancée-partner, Catherine McRae, agreed to give Bubby's the family recipe for a lip-smacking vinegar-based sauce invented by his grandfather, "Frog" Parker, a bush-league baseball catcher. Crismon plans to bottle it and cut the Parker family in on the profits; until then, you can squirt it over Bubby's delicious dry-rubbed pulled pork, the highlight of the new $21.95 all-you-can-eat barbecue plate, consisting of three sides and your choice of three meats, including smoky pork ribs; tasty chicken; sliced brisket; and the succulent pulled pork, all slow-cooked in a new hardwood smoker hidden away in Bubby's basement. If this keeps up, who knows? Future 'cue students may not have to hit the road to do their homework. (120 Hudson Street; 212-219-0666.) R.P.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CARINA SALVI.

stricken by Craft's hands-on menu. But before you get around to Tuesday's braised pork belly, Friday's fried flounder, or Saturday's spaghetti carbonara, you'll have to navigate a mouthwatering minefield of Italian-accented appetizers and snacks including risotto balls, salumi, and expertly pressed sandwiches. • 47 E. 19th St. (212-780-0880). (M)

Da Silvano Cantinetta
Although this annex to Da Silvano has a bar—a convenient place to sip a drink (or three) during the inevitable wait—it's not serving bar food. Instead, there's a serious menu of codfish carpaccio, taglierini with sea urchin and avocado, lobster catalana, and, soon, breakfast. The narrow sliver of a room has French doors, Italian straw-bottomed seats and bar stools, tea-stained stucco, and a vintage hand-cranked Italian slicer, guaranteeing perfect prosciutto (and, we're betting, panini). • 260 Sixth Ave. (212-844-0282). (M-E)

Dias
The point-and-cook Greek seafood concept popularized at Milos, Avra, and Trata has arrived on the Upper West Side, where charcoal-grilled fish, priced per pound, is featured along with the full complement of hot and cold mezedes and Greek salads, plus nightly specials like rabbit stifado and lamb fricassee. There's also a Greek-style Sunday brunch, a kids' menu, and an ouzeria downstairs. • 103 W. 77th St. (212-721-6603). (M)

elmo
Three years after their snazzy remake of Leshko's, its owners have exported their Knoll chairs and retro-mod tendencies to Chelsea, where chef Kevin Reilly cooks in a style he calls "ethnic New York." That means alphabet soup with dilled chicken dumplings and smoked paprika oil, and vegetable lo mein with roasted grapefruit and cashews. That painting above the bar happens to be Ross Bleckner's first commission in a decade. • 156 Seventh Ave., nr. 19th St. (212-337-8000). (M)

Fiamma
This ultrasleek SoHo triplex equipped with two bars and a glass elevator shuttling between them is Stephen Hanson's bid for SoHo stardom. He's enlisted chef Michael White, a veteran of high-profile kitchens in Chicago and Emilia-Romagna, to mastermind a multiregional modern Italian menu of dishes like pan-roasted sea scallops with crispy artichokes, garganelli with prosciutto ragù, and sheep's-milk-ricotta beignets. • 206 Spring St. (212-653-0100). (E)

Industry (Food)
What do you get when you mix chefs who worked for Jean-Louis Palladin and Jean-Georges Vongerichten, bartenders and managers from Bungalow 8 and BondSt, and a rustic design that borrows the tree motif from the Park? A place very much like this wood-paneled remake of the old Coup space. Chef Marco Morillo's French-American menu pays tribute to Palladin, his late mentor, in dishes like braised Kentucky short ribs with bone-marrow flan. • 509 E. 6th St. (212-777-5920). (M)

Jean-Luc
Ed "Jean-Luc" Kleefield aspired to bring downtown uptown, and he started out by recruiting former Raoul's chef Eric Le Dily, whose menu supplements standards like steak au poivre and lobster bisque with such newfangled notions as bison carpaccio and crab-crusted Chilean sea bass. The room is equally eclectic, mixing brick-red velvet banquettes and Biedermeier chairs with second-century mosaics. Bar menu, too. • 507 Columbus Ave., near 84th St. (212-712-1700). (M-E)

Kitchenette Uptown
This much roomier spinoff of the venerable TriBeCa comfort-food cottage and its expanded dinner menu might be reasons for the owners to reconsider the "ette" part of the name. But the food and the country-kitchen décor are as small-town quaint as ever. There are peach pancakes, salmon-croquette sandwiches, blue-plate specials, homemade pie, and, as the sign above the café-side counter says, breakfast, served all day. • 1272 Amsterdam Ave., near 123rd St. (212-531-7600). (I-M)

L'Incomparable
Judging by the name, this tiny no-frills Haitian storefront has less modesty than it does seats, but the food is fresh, tasty, and a bargain: Complete dinners run $10 to $16, and include a well-dressed salad and a choice of sides like rice and peas. Boulettes are meatballs, tassot is fried goat, and black rice, imported from the source, is available only on Fridays. • 328 E. 14th St. (212-228-3760). (I-M)

★ La Brunette
Williamsburg is overrun with cute little bistros, and this one stands out from the pack with its professional service, an ambience that doesn't strain itself trying to be hip, and a menu that melds Caribbean seasonings and ingredients with French technique. Scotch-bonnet peppers make their fiery presence felt in avocado-and-oxtail terrine, red-snapper tartare, and coq au vin served over a dense mound of mashed plantains. • 300 N. 6th St., Brooklyn (718-384-5800). (I-M)

★ Marseille
Named for the gritty, industrial port city, this Hell's Kitchen kitchen imbues the Film Center Building with a Casablanca-era French-Moroccan feel, replete with tile floor and zinc bar, but no piano. Chef Alex Ureña, late of Blue Hill, traverses the Mediterranean for stuffed zucchini blossoms, mussel bruschetta, rock-shrimp falafel, and the inevitable bouillabaisse. • 630 Ninth Ave., at 44th St. (212-333-3410). (M)

Meet
With a name that plays on its increasingly trendy location, this onetime meat locker is now inhabited by a D.J. booth, an illuminated catwalk, ostrich-leather banquettes, coconut-wood tables, and, according to consulting master Tin Sun, fine feng shui. Plus a menu that hits all the right contemporary notes, from brandade ravioli to walnut-crusted rack of lamb. Next door, Meet Café features panini, crostini, and pizzette. • 71-73 Gansevoort St. (212-242-0990). (M-E)

Nong
Seemingly overnight, the Asian-influenced Aleutia morphed into the all-Asian (mostly Thai and Japanese) Nong, and a chef who used to work at Ruby Foo's came in to consult on the spicy new menu. Choose from wok plates (chicken fried rice), large plates (cracked lobster with avocado), and bento-box lunches full of rolls, dumplings, and stir-fries. • 220 Park Ave. So., at 18th St. (212-529-3111). (M)

Olica
The sleek space that was formerly L'Actuel has reopened with a rejiggered menu and a new design incorporating sheer fabrics, earth tones, and light fixtures made from New Mexican twigs. Happily, L'Actuel's tart flambée is still available in all its bacony glory, and so are some signature dishes from the owners' first restaurant, the late Destinée, which closed after a fire. • 145 E. 50th St. (212-583-0001). (M-E)

ONY
This casual Japanese canteen comes to us via the owners of Menchanko-Tei, the noodle-shop chainlet. Only here, the name stands for "Original Noodle for You," and the focus is on customized ramen. Choose your broth and your toppings, and slurp. Or if that takes too much effort, go with one of the chef's specials, like kimchi menchanko, udon or soba noodles, fried calamari rolls, or Japanese-style fried free-range chicken. • 357 Sixth Ave. (212-414-8429). (I-M)

Osteria del Sole
On what might be one of the West Village's prettiest corners, the late EQ has quietly morphed into this lively trattoria, with a moderately priced menu of traditional Italian fare and a boisterous Italian clientele that laps it up. Until the liquor license arrives, the busboys will happily fetch a bottle for you from the local liquor store (as long as you pay up front). • 267 W. 4th St. (212-620-6840). (M)

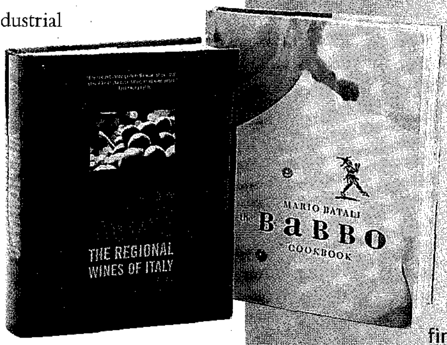
Ottimo
In the former Flatiron premises of Follonico, Neapolitan chef Salvatore Esposito, who cooked most recently at La Pizza Fresca, continues to ply his traditional buffalo mozzarella and San Marzano tomato pizza trade. Should one ever tire of authentic Neapolitan-style pies—an unlikely scenario—there's plenty of seafood and other mostly southern-Italian fare. • 6 W. 24th St. (212-337-0074). (M)

★ Paradou
There's a feeling of garlic-soaked bonhomie at this cozy bistro à vins named after the bucolic Provençal village of Le Paradou ("paradise" in the local dialect) and dedicated to serving wine-friendly food like ripe cheeses, charcuterie, tartines, crêpes, and hearty rustic pressed sandwiches like the one of duck rillettes, capers, roasted tomatoes, and shallots. In warm weather, a garden with a pétanque court provides extra seating, and behind that, in a delicious bit of Manhattan real-estate irony, lurks Hell (the lounge). • 8 Little W. 12th St. (212-463-8345). (I-M)

Providence
Sur, Boerum Hill's first Argentine steakhouse, has spawned a sister restaurant and subterranean lounge across the steet. But even though hardcore carnivores will find meat on the menu, the kitchen takes its inspiration from the Mediterranean Rim, serving up dishes like cucumber-and-beet salad with blood-orange yogurt dressing, sautéed octopus with saffron potatoes, and spinach gnocchi with pancetta, ricotta, and

IN PRINT

Now that Mario Batali has published **The Babbo Cookbook** (Clarkson Potter; $40), you too can learn the finer points of turning hog jowls into guanciale, ridding tripe of "the uric smell most people find objectionable," and testing the mettle of your butcher: "The real ones buy whole pigs on occasion and can save a head for a regular customer." To cook well, you must shop well—or, as Batali puts it, "Shop hard and shop smart." And even though there's enough pasta and antipasti to keep vegetarians happy, herbivores are clearly not Batali's target demographic. "Bottom line, find a butcher, make a friend, get your hands dirty, and let's have some dinner." In that case, you'll want wine, and as luck (and a mutual publisher) would have it, Batali's partner Joe Bastianich and Babbo wine director David Lynch have just collaborated on **Vino Italiano** ($35), a vastly informative, entertaining tome that breaks down the convoluted world of Italian wine by region, with detailed appendices on grape varieties, producers, importers, and retailers (including the Manhattan wine shop co-owned by Batali and Bastianich). With recipes by Batali and Joe's mother, Lidia, this might be the only wine book to ever make you hungry.



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PHOTOGRAPH BY DASHA WRIGHT EWING.

sage. • 225 Smith St., Brooklyn (718-522-9060). (M) ($)

Punch & Judy
The Lower East Side's hippest restaurant row has a new wine bar with twenty international selections served by the (Riedel) glass, a Mediterranean-inspired menu, and thirties theater seats bolted to the floor. • 26 Clinton St. (212-982-1116). (M)

Rochjin Asian Noodle
Just what the NYU neighborhood needed: an alcohol-and-smoke-free zone open till 2 A.M. where students and other frazzled East Villagers can restore themselves with fresh ginger and lemongrass juices, and an assortment of noodle soups featuring Thai fish balls made by Yang's godmother, his chef and partner, who pulverizes yellowtail snapper with hot and cold water and abstains from MSG, filler, and flour. • 92 Third Ave. (212-614-7294). (I–M)

Rouge
After dabbling in sushi and habanero sauce, David Ruggerio has returned to his classic-French roots. At Rouge, the one-man restaurant-hatching machine is back at the stove, reprising the type of cooking he earned a reputation for at La Caravelle and Le Chantilly. Unlike at those high-flying kitchens, though, Ruggerio will keep à la carte entrées like braised breast of veal and roasted skate with red cabbage and mustard sauce below $20. • 135 E. 62nd St. (212-207-4601). (M)

Royal
If Chairman Mao were still laughing, he'd giggle to know there's a slicked-up tablecloth joint on Mott Street touting a "provincial" menu of his favorite dishes. Most everything's larded with torrid red and green peppers to pick out and set aside in hopes of survival . . . absolutely delicious. And the Hong Kong salt-baked squid are amazing, too. • 1 Mott St. (212-964-9650). (M)

★ Suba
With an offbeat menu that melds Spanish and Latin-American flavors, and an aquatic motif involving a pool and an illuminated moat, this Lower East Side restaurant and lounge aspires to make something of a splash. Chef Stéphane Buchholzer goes with the flow, serving a selection of $3 tapas and bigger plates of roasted vegetables with fig jam and saffron crackers, and Cornish hen with steamed mussels and rice croquettes. • 109 Ludlow St. (212-982-5714). (M)

★ Théo
From Jonathan Morr of BondSt, Republic, and APT fame comes this bistro and lounge, carved out of an unoccupied corner of the gargantuan UPS building in West SoHo. The menu dips into international comfort-food territory with dishes like crab cocktail with avocado salad, veal osso buco with mushroom risotto, and fish stew with pastis and garlic crostini. • 325 Spring St. (212-414-1344). (M)

Tournesol
Rather than follow the example of countless Brooklyn-bound restaurateurs before him, Pascal Escriout, the former maître d' at Artisanal and a neighborhood resident, opted to plug the steak-frites gap in his own backyard. The apparently famished neighborhood fills the 40-seat premises for gently priced fish soup, mussels, homemade foie gras terrine, and plats du jour like cassoulet and coq au vin. • 50-12 Vernon Blvd., Queens (718-472-4355). (M) ($)

2 West
The restaurant at the new Ritz-Carlton in Battery Park serves playful bento boxes and multiculti noodles at lunch, and a dinner menu full of local vittles like sake-braised Hudson Valley foie gras. The adjacent Lobby Lounge breaks British convention with a "power tea" of steak tartare, foie gras, and Stilton soufflé. And the fourteenth-floor bar, Rise, with its spectacular harbor views, has inherited something of the awe-inspiring spirit of the late Windows on the World. • 2 West St. (212-344-0800). (M–E)

★ Via Emilia
After playing it safe for years with a greatest-Italian-hits menu, the chef-owner of the former Trattoria i Pagliacci has returned to his Emilia-Romagna culinary roots. The menu features homemade tortellini and tortelloni, a preponderance of balsamic vinegar, and best of all, gnoccho fritto, a basket of puffy fritters served with great cured meats—street-festival fried dough gone to finishing school. • 240 Park Ave. S., nr. 20th St. (212-505-3072). (I–M)

Washington Park
This long-awaited restaurant marks the return of veteran chef Jonathan Waxman and the chicken he made famous (or that made him famous) at Jams. He's revived signature dishes like red-pepper pancakes with wild smoked salmon, and concocted whimsical appetizers like foie gras tacos and caviar-laced Belon stews. A $45 three-course prix fixe menu changes daily, and reflects the chef's seasonal slant. • 24 Fifth Ave. (212-529-4400). (M–E)

Wild Lily Tea Market
A serene spinoff off West Chelsea's Wild Lily Tea Room, this equally remote oasis of oolongs and Darjeelings is budget-priced for the East Village. Over 50 brews are quirkily described on the menu, along with sweet and savory Asian snacks. Besides selling tea by the ounce, the owner's accumulated a selection of stylish products made both for tea (cups, infusers) and from it (green-tea soap, business cards, and odor-fighting insoles for your shoes). • 545 E. 12th St. (212-598-9097). (I) ($)

Wild Tuna Restaurant & Market
It's not Jorma Kaukonen's venture into the restaurant business but Shelly Fireman's latest back-and-forth with what began as an Italian restaurant, morphed into a Brooklyn-inspired seafood emporium, and later became the East Side outpost of the Brooklyn Diner. Now Fireman has piled on the seafood again, this time at slightly lower prices. • 1081 Third Ave., nr. 63rd St. (212-838-7570). (M–E)

win49
From the owners of Tomoe Sushi comes this spiffy takeout shop on the Lower East Side, specializing in the deep-fried skewered meat called kushikatsu. There's no limit, apparently, to what you can eat on a stick, from breaded pork and shrimp to quail eggs, meat balls, and asparagus and bacon. Order by the skewer, by the dozen, or by the 27-skewer party pack. For variety, there's a limited selection of tempura and sushi. • 205 Allen St. (212-353-9494). (I) ($)

Manhattan

Lower New York

★ aKa Cafe
Another funky little place from the 71 Clinton Fresh Food folks. This one features a clever, inexpensive small-plates menu with nods toward the neighborhood and its suppliers. The perfectly flaky braised-pork empanada is superb; oyster soup comes with Streits's matzo on the side; and the pressed chopped-hanger steak slider on a bialy with Gus's pickle slices and onions is the best thing to happen to that onion bun since Kossar. • 49 Clinton St. (212-979-6096). (I)

★ Chanterelle
The Waltucks, Karen and David, have specific ideas about how to make an evening unforgettable. The walls are without art. No music. Chairs are huge; plates are, too. The goal is to get you to concentrate solely on who you are with and what you are eating—the stunning juxtapositions of David's quail and star anise, lamb with cumin crust, crabs in ginger, and strawberry mille-feuille with elderflower sorbet. • 2 Harrison St., at Hudson St. (212-966-6960). (E)

Delmonico's
Eat with the Big Boys at this sprawling, beautifully restored New York City icon. Start the feast the way Diamond Jim would have, with oysters Rockefeller and clams Casino, and end it with baked Alaska; in between there's lobster Newburg, rack of lamb, and, of course, the classic Delmonico's steak. And don't forget your jacket—or your wallet. • 56 Beaver St. (212-509-1144). (E)

★ The Harrison
With its long, bustling bar, commodious beamy interior, and friendly neighborhood vibe, the Red Cat's Jimmy Bradley and Danny Abrams's new hot spot feels like it's been part of the local landscape for years. There are all sorts of dining options—you can spend a week snarfing the spicy fries—but we like the big dishes best: the crispy chicken served on a fat mattress of scallion mashed potatoes, calf's liver smothered in a sweet sherry sauce, and the house shell steak drizzled with crisps of pancetta. • 355 Greenwich St. (212-274-9310). (M)

Layla
Drew Nieporent and company worked tirelessly last fall feeding rescue workers and boosting downtown, and he reopened all of his restaurants except one. Now, after promoting the sous-chef and tweaking the menu, he decided the time was right for a less Middle Eastern, more Mediterranean Layla. Good news for the neighborhood, not to mention the belly dancer, who's finally back in business after a temporary stint checking coats at Tribeca Grill. • 211 W. Broadway (212-431-0700). (E)

★ The Natural Restaurant
There isn't a seafood restaurant in New York with fresher produce than Natural, nor is there anyone

Ask Gael

Am I walking into a time warp?

With its intimations of the late, lamented Jams—waiters in suits, art (more or less) everywhere, and Jonathan Waxman himself tipping a sauté pan in the open kitchen—**Washington Park** is like coming home again. In this era of frippery, you almost gasp at the audacity: simple food, simply done. Just great produce and sparkling fish. Line-caught salmon, as rare as you wish. Striped bass with green garlic on cranberry beans. A perfect roast chicken with fries. There's a smart cornichon crunch in the sweet-pea gazpacho. And you can almost taste the garden in beet-and-blood-orange salad. Perhaps the rib eye could be thicker, the sundae more flamboyant. So many morels in the pasta call for more noodles (the Road Food Warrior's complaint). I miss strawberry-rhubarb pie, replaced one evening by a too-sweet crisp. But sorbets are smooth and tart, and the chocolate cake with its irresistible crackle cannot be denied. (24 Fifth Avenue; 212-529-1700.)

PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNETH CHEN.

around who can fry a fish as greaselessly. Whether it's fragrant fried rice, razor-thin pork chops, lean beef with scallions and oyster mushrooms, or dense and gulp-worthy soups, each dish reminds you that the sludge in the white cardboard container called takeout was never what anybody really wanted, just what we got used to. • 88 Allen St. (212-966-1321). (I–M)

★ Snack
Don't be fooled by the name: This tiny SoHo storefront is a full-fledged restaurant. The emphasis is on fresh Greek salads and meze, like tzatziki and skordalia, but the kitchen also turns out creative Greek-inspired sandwiches, roasted chicken, savory pastries stuffed with chicken and olives, and daily specials like pastitsio and braised lamb. Greek wines and beer round out the Hellenic experience. • 105 Thompson St. (212-925-1040). (I)

Below 14th Street, East

★ Banjara
In spite of its location amid all those cookie-cutter curry cookers, Banjara is an oasis on Little India's restaurant row. The room and adjoining lounge are cliché-free. And chef Tuhin Dutta's unusual dishes like juicy clay-oven chicken marinated in wine and cream, and dumpakht (think supercolossal Indian potpie) should dispel any worries that the street's mythical underground shared kitchen has taken on a new client. • 97 First Ave. (212-477-5956). (M)

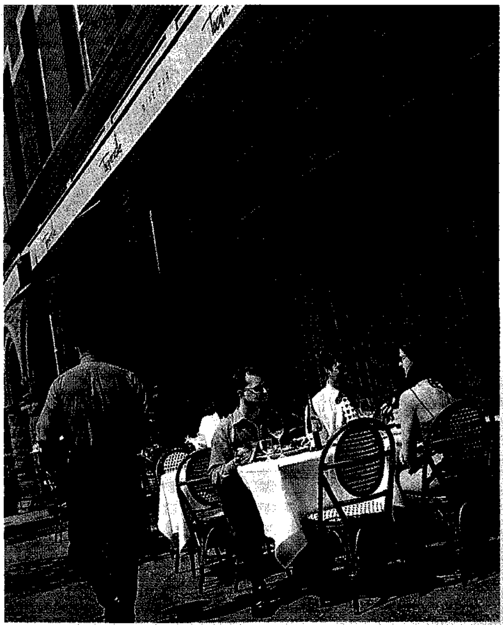
★ Gotham Bar & Grill
What began with an unfocused menu of Americana in a raucous eighties-style grand café has mellowed over two decades into a trusted classic with Alfred Portale relentlessly pursuing perfection in the kitchen. Settle into a cocoon of confident service—informal but informed, friendly but unintrusive. Then, depending on the season and the market, rediscover Portale's discipline in a lush truffle-oil-perfumed risotto with caramelized sweet turnips, duck confit, and savoy cabbage. Or in a rustic and garlicky white-bean soup with floats of rabbit confit and wilted greens. Or in seared yellowfin propped alongside pappardelle rolled around caponata in which each vegetable is like a jewel. • 12 E. 12th St. (212-620-4020). (E)

★ Japonica
Its waiting area is sadistic. Unless you come at six or just before closing, you're probably going to have to hover along that zigzagging ramp. Why do so many bother? Because Japonica's high standards, skilled masters, and huge turnover mean some of the freshest and most varied selection of sushi to be found downtown. • 100 University Pl. (212-243-7752). (M)

Osso Buco
Popular Italian restaurant on a much-traveled Village corridor serving family-style portions of the eponymous house specialty, Caesar salad, fried calamari, and T-bone steak. • 88 University Pl. (212-645-4525). Also, 1662 Third Ave., at 93rd St. (426-5422). (M)

Patio Dining
Sara Jenkins, late of Il Buco and I Coppi, took over the range at this tiny closet of an East Village restaurant formerly known as Mugsy's Chow Chow. Rebelling against years of strictly Italian cooking, she changes her menu daily, forging her own seasonally inspired identity with dishes like cauliflower soup, spring rabbit stew, and pan-seared duck breast with fennel three ways (roasted, shaved, and pollen-dusted). • 31 Second Ave. (212-460-9171). (I–M)

Tappo
The menu says "baby," but this is a big baby octopus, all in one piece, brilliantly caramelized and meltingly tender. It's just one of the mostly oversize Mediterranean appetizers, best followed by a pasta from the list of daily specials—sensational maltagliati with Genovese ragù, or luscious spinach-and-ricotta raviolini in a fresh tomato sauce—and then perhaps a grilled sirloin for the table to share in this romantically dim flea market of a room. (Yes, a lot of the furniture is for sale.) • 403 E. 12th St. (212-505-0001). (M)



Below 14th Street, West

★ Blue Ribbon Bakery
Don't be hoodwinked by what looks like one more brick-walled Village joint that serves brunch. Instead, focus on the intriguing all-over-the-place menu's superb steak tartare, perfectly smoked sable, a butcher's plate to shame most Italian antipasti, a BLT that really is a meal. And can you pass up any place that can still make a root-beer float? • 33 Downing St. (212-337-0404). (M)

Burrito Loco
The house burrito comes with three sauces and a choice of beef, pork, or chicken. There's a rendition stuffed with roasted lamb, another with a chipotle-spiked tomatillo salsa, and lots of vegetarian options. And even though it could probably survive just by serving the hordes of marauding college students nachos and tacos, the festive cantina keeps things interesting with cactus salad and shrimp seviche. • 166 W. 4th St. (212-675-1977). (I–M)

Cafe Alyss
If Cafe Alyss seems like a fish out of water, located among all those late-night Village falafel stands and slice joints, that's only fitting. The specialty here is seafood, creatively prepared from quality ingredients. Try pan-seared dry sea scallops with sweet onion purée, and don't skip dessert. The $9.99 brunch is a particulary good deal, even for cash-strapped NYU students. • 222 Thompson St. (212-387-8239). (M–E)

★ Lupa
We love this down-home Roman trattoria and not just for Mario Batali's celebration of odd animal parts and Italian delicatessen, or for partner Joe Bastianich's bid to bring depth and finesse to a casual Village joint's wine service. We like the mood, the food, and the gentle prices, but so do legions of tuned-in New Yorkers. It's almost as tough a sanctum to crack as its pricier sibling, Babbo. • 170 Thompson St. (212-982-5089). (M)

★ Pastis
Keith McNally's Pastis looks more like a grander Lucky Strike than a repro of the visually faultless Balthazar, but not only does the slight downshifting make perfect sense; considering the tallowy neighborhood, it also renders the new place less imposing. Service is breezier, the crowd more genially noisy, and the only thing disappointing is that you don't live closer. • 9 Ninth Ave. (212-929-4844). (M)

Stonewall Bistro
The legendary bar's sister bistro has a laid-back Parisian feel and a menu with something for everyone, including a Black Angus burger, Chilean sea bass, and hanger steak with wild-mushroom jus, not to mention a $12.95 early-bird prix fixe menu. Veteran piano man Jerry Scott provides the soundtrack. • 113 Seventh Ave. So. (917-661-1335). (M)

Tio Pepe
Can't decide between Mexican and Spanish? This Greenwich Village kitchen has been doling out both for over three decades, and to judge by the liquor supply, the bar's been stocking a new brand of tequila every year. That sort of variety contributes to the general merriment, as do a heaping paella Valenciana and bicultural tapas like garlic shrimp and nachos, which many seem to enjoy in the skylit garden room. • 168 W. 4th St. (212-242-9338). (I–M)

★ Wallsé
Who knew veal goulash could be elegant? Kurt Gutenbrunner's version is an artful mound of tender meat you almost regret toppling. And though dishes like tafelspitz and wiener schnitzel seem like a culinary memoir, the guiding principle here is less goulash than Greenmarket. Local farmers supply Gutenbrunner with lemon thyme for his pike, heirloom tomatoes for his lamb salad, and the sweet strawberries that garnish his elderflower sorbet. • 344 W. 11th St. (212-352-2300). (M–E)

14th–42nd Streets, East Side

Andreas Brick Oven Ristorante
Affordable Italian fare in a warm and woody setting. Lobster ravioli, osso buco, and linguine fra diavolo frutti di mare are among several entrées served in individual or family-size portions, and the thin-crust brick-oven pizza comes any way you like. So, practically, do the 20 various versions of martinis. • 307 Third Ave., nr. 23rd St. (212-779-2125). (I–M) ($)

★ Beppe
Cesare Casella's devoted fans know him for his Tuscan cooking and his signature breast-pocket herb bouquet, both of which have resurfaced at this Gramercy trattoria. You'll also find an instant coziness, a pride of rustic Tuscan products stashed behind glass at the entrance, the warmth of a giant open fireplace. Casella's cozze are plump and sweet in a fiery broth; chewy handmade pinci noodles in walnut-tomato sauce are a triumph. We love braised black cabbage in toasted Tuscan bread, savory braised spare ribs, and desserts like sensational lemon "pudding" with candied orange peel. • 45 E. 22nd St. (212-982-8422). (E)

Curry Leaf
While the Curry Hill competition focuses on the food of specific subcontinental regions—or, at the very least, hews to the meat-eating north or the veggie south—the idea here is to offer Kashmiri chicken korma alongside Pakistani chana masala and Goan lamb vindaloo. There's more to Indian food, after all, than curry powder—there's the leaf, too, used here as a garnish.

Opening

Square Meal

For an elegant urban restaurant, **Tocqueville** is doubly blessed by its proximity to New York City nature (such as it is). Not only is it up the street from the Union Square Greenmarket—it also happens to face a trio of pear trees, the perfect backdrop for the restaurant's new sidewalk café. And though chef Marco Moreira has devised a new alfresco menu of light, luxurious bites like Brazilian crab cake with malagueta-pepper-and-lime vinaigrette, a mini-burger with lobster and tomato relish, and haché lobster salad, we're most excited about the return of his prosciutto-and-asiago panini, accessorized with white-truffle oil and a sunny-side-up pheasant egg. (15 East 15th Street; 212-647-1515.)

PHOTOGRAPH BY PATRIK RYTIKANGAS.

• 99 Lexington Ave., at 27th St. (212-725-5558). (M)

★ Gramercy Tavern
Tavern has become Danny Meyer's most appealing restaurant, with a no reservations discount bar room to make one churlish for not living or working nearby. Chef Tom Colicchio pairs foods folks crave with elements they usually don't. Roast sirloin of beef comes with braised beef cheeks. Crabmeat fondue contains sea urchin. Not only does each gamble pay off, but so tickled are diners by their nascent daring that on their next visit, damned if they don't demand sweetbreads with Jerusalem artichokes and roasted cod with brussels sprouts. • 42 E. 20th St. (212-477-0777). (M–E)

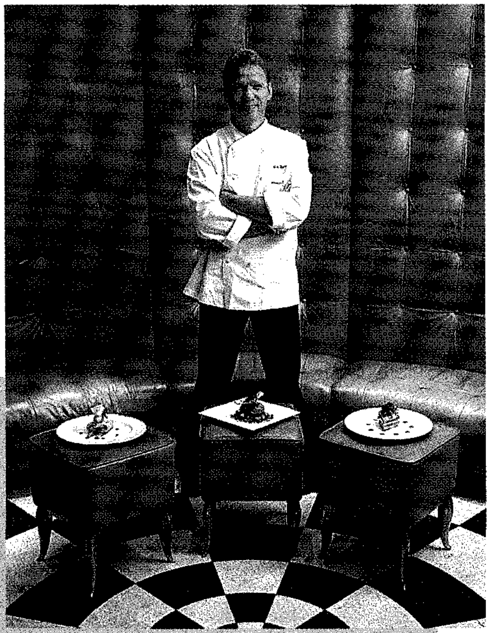
Heartland Brewery
A rollicking brewpub with a lively outdoor café. Accompany your choice of microbrew with stout-battered onion rings, a buffalo burger, or sesame-crusted ahi tuna. The beer-weary can sample from the city's largest selection of tequilas and single-malt scotches. • 35 Union Square W. (212-645-3400). Also, 1285 Sixth Ave., at 51st St. (582-8244). (I–M)

Meli Melo
This cheerful neighborhood spot offers a very reasonable fixed-price dinner—$31.50 for four courses. The seafood-heavy French menu has Asian and Mediterranean touches in dishes like seared tuna with baby bok choy and rack of lamb with couscous. • 110 Madison Ave., nr. 29th St. (212-686-5551). (M)

★ Pipa
Doug Rodriguez has done Nuevo Latino at Patria and Chicama. Here he tackles old-world Spanish. A field trip to Galicia yielded dozens of recipes for tapas, casseroles, soups, and flatbreads, which undergo subtle and delicious transformation here. To wit: bocarones in escabeche with almond-crusted queso de cabra, crispy anchovies wrapped in sage leaves, and churros with warm chocolate sauce for dessert. Much more radical is the conversion of the old Parlour Cafe into a seductive Iberian oasis. • 38 E. 19th St. (212-677-2233). (M)

New Menu

Kind of Blue



It's been months since we heard that famed French chef Claude Troisgros (pictured) was checking out of the Delano to open a Manhattan branch of that Miami hotel's restaurant, Blue Door, at the Royalton. He must still be working on his tan, since he's postponed his move north until the end of the year. In the interim, to generate some South Beach sizzle at '44,' the Royalton has launched a new teaser of a three-course prix fixe menu called "Baby Blue" ($44 for lunch and pretheater; $55 after 7 P.M.), showcasing the chef's tropical French flair and his predilection for exotic fruits and crunchy caramelized nuts. Troisgros flew north to train the '44' kitchen to stuff ravioli with South American celery root, enliven a New York strip with jalapeño and wasabi, and thread scallops on a breadstick skewer for his "Saint Jacques stick." (44 West 44th Street; 212-944-8844.)

The Pump Energy Food
There simply isn't any way to cheat at this "Physical Fitness Restaurant" and takeout shop. The falafel is baked, not fried; the tuna is low-sodium; and all the egg dishes are whites-only. In fact there's no fried food at all, no oil period, not even a soda in the house. • 113 E. 31st St. (212-213-5733). Also, 40 W. 55th St. (246-6844). (I)

Rodeo Bar & Grill
This place bills itself as "the longest-running honky-tonk in New York," attracting bikers, families, and music-industry insiders. Try the house-smoked baby back ribs, bison burgers, and Santa Fe hand rolls, or just grab a drink at the horse trailer that's been converted into a bar. • 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (212-683-6500). (I)

TanDa
Another Park Avenue South restaurant-lounge, this one from a few survivors of the original Moomba, and featuring Hong Kong chef Stanley Wong's Southeast Asian fare. Tan Da was a Vietnamese poet who wrote, "Food and wine are the essence of life." The corresponding significance of lounges and D.J.'s eluded him, but it's a safe bet that the owners of Tan-Da won't make the same mistake. • 331 Park Avenue S. (212-253-8400). (M–E)

★ Union Pacific
A dramatic otherworldly rain-forest setting is a fitting stage for Rocco DiSpirito's wildly inventive, wonderfully weird cooking. Sweet, small scallops nuzzled in their shells by blobs of sea urchin with an essence of tomato, mustard oil, mirin and black mustard. Halibut braised in goose fat with ginger jus and shallot cracklings. Mango and papaya carpaccio with pineapple sherbet and candied cilantro. In less capable hands, mad delusions; in DiSpirito's, pure genius. • 111 E. 22nd St. (212-995-8500). (E)

14th–42nd Streets, West Side

★ Above
Twenty-one floors above the to-'n'-fro of 42nd Street, this handsomely designed hideaway in the Times Square Hilton awaits you, and so does a first-rate celebration of Americana (with just a few Asian blips). Namely, mignon of yellowfin tuna, a classic Caesar, and seared wild salmon on a sumptuous soft corn pudding. • 234 W. 42nd St. (212-642-2626). (E)

Arno
Garment District bigwigs and pre-Garden revelers flock to this lively, upscale northern Italian restaurant. Try reliable classics like veal scaloppine and red snapper sautéed with shrimp and clams, garlic, and white wine. • 141 W. 38th St. (212-944-7420). (M–E)

★ Ilo
Though its neutral, geometric décor may appear too understated to crest the torrential wave of hotel restaurants, Ilo makes the rest of them seem like washouts. Chef–owner Rick Laakkonen's charms and talents are many: a rich lemon-thyme-scented ragout of octopus and Manila clams; pan-roasted rabbit with olives and oregano; grilled quail devilishly grounded by white hominy; and a gloriously simple roasted duck that will make you consider taking up residence at the Bryant Park. • 40 W. 40th St. (212-642-2255). (E)

★ Lotus
Everything you wanted from a trendy club-bar-restaurant and less. Less attitude, less discomfort, less elbow contact, and less forgettable food. Lotus is a blooming surprise. A slight kitschiness keeps it warm. Nice-guy owners keep it friendly. And chef Richard Farnabe keeps you well-fed. Think of the velvet rope outside as a ribbon. And Lotus as a gift. • 409 W. 14th St. (212-243-4420). (M–E)

★ Mandoo Bar
Mandoo, or Korean dumplings, are the chief attraction at Mandoo Bar, where they're hand-formed in the window by a pair of nimble-fingered women who stop traffic with their engaging labors. We're partial to the steamed kimchi variety, in which the typical pork-and-vegetable stuffing is fortified with tofu and a smidgen of the cuisine-defining pickled cabbage. • 2 West 32nd St. (212-279-3075). (I)

Radius
Miso-glazed, sesame-crusted salmon; beef satay; a New Haven–style clam pizza; lasagna Bolognese; and paella are only a few of the global offerings at this modern, minimalist midtown restaurant, plus there's rotating sushi on a stainless-steel conveyor. • 111 West 38th St. (212-869-1818). (I–M)

Slate
Even if pool isn't your game, you might be willing to brave this hall's not exactly tony crowd, giant TVs, and techno throb—not to mention big guys wielding big sticks—for a crack at some delectable comfort food. The big cheese-and-mushroom-stuffed burger alone is worth crossing this cultural divide, and the chewy rare hanger steak is remarkable. • 54 West 21st St. (212-989-0096). (M)

World Yacht Dining Cruises
Take an out-of-town visitor to see the sights—all of them—and sup on a selection from the "Best of New York" menu: featuring dishes based on recipes from the Sea Grill's Ed Brown and Aquavit's Marcus Samuelsson among others. Jacket required. • Pier 81, W. 41st St. and the Hudson River (212-630-8100). (E)

43rd–56th Streets, East Side

★ Brasserie
Nostalgists may have wished for a clone of the original Brasserie. But the redesign is stunning and the big-brother video screens make as much of your entrance as those bygone steps used to. The classic French food (onion soup, duck cassoulet, mandatory beignets) is satisfying and served from breakfast through late night—a welcome anomaly in this early-to-bed precinct. • 100 E. 53rd St. (212-751-4840). (M–E)

Divine Bar
This East Side establishment is all things to all people: a cigar bar, a wine bar, a tapas lounge, and a casual, couch-filled living room where local office workers can often be found unwinding. • 244 E. 51st St. (212-319-9463). Also, 55 Liberty St., second floor (791-9463). (I–M)

★ Fresco
A family restaurant thriving on Arthur Avenue in the Bronx one can understand. But in midtown? Yet the Scotto clan strolls around the dining room, cajoling, nudging, hugging, as if you'd shown up at their house for leftovers the day after Thanksgiving. For them, Fresco is one big welcome mat. Doesn't matter that the pizza is to die for, the lasagna superb; and if you like liver, you may never want to leave. • 34 E. 52nd St. (212-935-3434). (M–E)

Giambelli 50th Ristorante
Upscale Italian fare served in a warm and cozy atmosphere. The chef imports esoteric varieties of pasta from Italy to prepare his specialties; the fish and meat dishes are as careful. • 46 E. 50th St. (212-688-2760). (M)

PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNETH CHEN.

Haru
Haru means "spring" in Japanese, and the design theme at this fourth and funkiest Manhattan branch of the Haru chainlet is man-made nature, from the digital-photomural-of-grass floor to the robotic fish in the aquariums over the bar. The menu features all the usual suspects, plus fusion fare like a strip steak with wasabi croquette, spicy shallots, and ginger sauce. • 280 Park Ave., at 48th St. (212-490-9680). (M)

★ Maloney & Porcelli
Maloney & Porcelli claims it isn't a steakhouse, but the tide of pinstripe and hunks of food suggest otherwise. The best meat dish, though, isn't steak but a mammoth "crackling" pork shank—which arrives with a steak knife thrust deep into it—and the service couldn't be nicer. • 37 E. 50th St. (212-750-2233). (E)

Nino's Positano
Upscale Italian specializing in food from the south, Positano in particular. Pastas range from the simple (fusilli with tomato-basil sauce) to the more complex (Cognac-infused seafood risotto), and main courses traverse similar territory. • 890 Second Ave., nr. 47th St. (212-355-5540). (M)

One 51
A twenties opera house turned twenty-first-century nightclub, with weekly theme nights like Latin Tuesdays. And should all that dancing make you hungry, the kitchen offers polyglot-American tapas and prix-fixe dinners, incorporating global flavors in everything from "semi-sushi" salmon with wasabi cream and ginger, to slow-roasted duck breast with cantaloupe glaze and polenta. • 151 E. 50th St. (212-753-1144). (M–E)

Smith & Wollensky
Urban cowboys herd together over big steaks with knives to match at impresario Alan Stillman's signature chophouse. The place has that landmark-steakhouse look—bare oak floors, a raffish air, and bustling waiters wearing service stars. There's surf and turf aplenty, improvisations at lunch, and an enviable wine cellar. • 797 Third Ave., at 49th St. (212-753-1530). (M–E)

43rd–56th Streets, West Side

Adrienne
Maybe you're not an out-of-towner on a spending spree, but you can pretend to be at this posh hotel restaurant. Chef Oliver Dudler's modern French menu changes seasonally, and incorporates to-be-expected luxury ingredients like lobster (in a salad with braised mango), foie gras (with beet sorbet), and roasted Colorado rack of lamb. The $50 prix fixe dinner is a (relative) steal. • 700 Fifth Ave., at 55th St., in the Peninsula (212-903-3918). (M–E)

★ Aquavit
Swedish chef Marcus Samuelsson puts his own uninhibited spin on Scandinavian food, which isn't to say you won't find herring, gravlax, and Swedish meatballs. But for every expected Northern delight there's an innovation like tandoori-smoked char with goat-cheese parfait and Osetra caviar. Those who find the quasi-corporate dining room frosty can warm up with an aquavit or dine upstairs in the café. • 13 W. 54th St. (212-307-7311). (M–E)

★ Baldoria
Everyone at Frank Pellegrino Jr.'s Baldoria toils to make sure customers stay happy enough to sing along with Jimmy Roselli on the jukebox. There's luscious veal scallopine, aromatic spaghetti with clams, a raw bar upstairs, and best of all, 136 seats. So, if you still can't get into Rao's—Junior's father's legendary celebrity hangout—now you don't have to. • 249 W. 49th St. (212-582-0460). (E)

Ben Benson's Steak House
This rollicking steakhouse has long fed hordes of hungry, beef-eating businessmen and the people who love them. At a time when steakhouses were famous for rudeness and hauteur, Benson's made a point of homeyness. The festive air gets pretty thick by the bar, where cigars prevail, but there's a weatherproofed "front porch" and a dining room devoted entirely to the assiduous consumption of prime aged beef. • 123 W. 52nd St. (212-581-8888). (E)

Benihana
Long before *Iron Chef* taught us just how quick-handed knife-wielding Japanese cooks can be, there were the tableside cooking shows that are still the main draw at this teppanyaki steakhouse. Kids, of course, love it. • 47 W. 56th St. (212-581-0930). (E)

Bombay Palace
This newly refurbished, elegant Indian restaurant has been serving its refined tandoori prawns, lamb kandhari, and chicken kashmiri in midtown for years. Try the excellent breads. • 30 W. 52nd St. (212-541-7777). (M)

Cité
Ambassador of beef Alan Stillman cops a French accent at this soaring midtown steakhouse known for its wine dinners. Meat is just the hard core of the menu, a document that also includes pan-roasted salmon "choucroute," grilled chicken merguez sausage, and desserts big enough for two or more to share. For more casual dining, try the Cité Grill next door. • 120 W. 51st St. (212-956-7100). (M–E)

Da Rosina
Those with curtains to make and bellies to fill find just what they're looking for in this Restaurant Row standby, a reliable source for homemade pasta, chicken and veal cutlets every which way, and Italian classics from fried clams to tirami su. A $22 prix fixe dinner and $13.95 lunch make it easy to splurge on affordable indulgences like spicy lobster frutti di mare and broiled sirloin steak. • 342 W. 46th St. (212-977-7373). (M)

★ DB Bistro Moderne
Daniel Boulud's latest venture is supposed to be an homage to the simple bistro foods of his youth, but the great chef can't help making things fancy. Take boeuf en gelee, which Chef Boulud coats with sweet horseradish cream and serves in a dainty parfait glass. Or the $29 "DB Burger," leavened with foie gras and short ribs and a silver cup of pommes soufflés on the side. The space can feel a little hectic around theater time, but elbow your way in if you can. • 55 W. 44th St. (212-391-2400). (E)

★ Del Frisco's
Want to see what mahogany fashioned by testosterone looks like? This is without question the most urbane steakhouse you will ever see, its meat locker filled with terrific beef. From the usually overrated filet mignon, whose buttery blandness gets surmounted by a brash pepper-splattered crust, to the superb 26-ounce "double eagle" strip, Del Frisco's is a silverware-clanking crowd pleaser. • 1221 Sixth Ave., at 49th St. (212-575-5129). (E)

Heartland Brewery & Chop House
With hefty hunks of prime aged beef, braised buffalo short ribs, and lobster-and-crab-stuffed ravioli—not to mention a superb artisanal-cheese-and-beer tasting plate—this third branch of the popular brewpub chain is clearly the most culinarily ambitious. But the mood is still mellow, especially at the bar, a rare, comfortable Times Square spot to toss back some of the terrific hand-crafted brews. • 127 W. 43rd St. (646-366-0235). (M–E)

★ Le Bernardin
Criticizing Le Bernardin is like analyzing rainbows. Just try to describe the snapper in coconut milk or the black bass with truffles and celery root. Submit to the sorcery of chef Eric Ripert, the bewitchery of owner and co-creator Maguy Le Coze, and experience the thrilling sensation of having everything perfect. • 155 W. 51st St. (212-489-1515). (E)

Martini's
Convenient for pre- and post-theater dining, with a buzzing sidewalk café and rustic homemade pastas, charcoal-grilled seafood, and, of course, multiple variations of the house drink. • 810 Seventh Ave., at 53rd St. (212-767-1717). (M)

★ Thalia
The striking interior may not prepare you for the simplicity of this theater-district restaurant's preparations. Nevertheless, grilled black sea bass in a lobster crème, honey-cured salmon in puff pastry with whipped dill creme fraîche and lamb with peach-mango chutney are not plats du jour at Beefsteak Charlie's. • 828 Eighth Ave. (212-399-4444). (M–E)

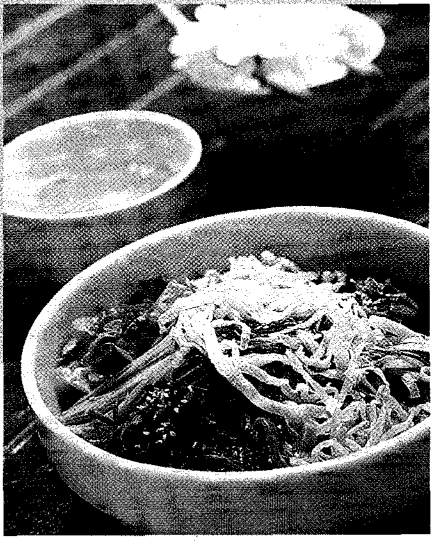
★ Town
A delightful sensation takes over the moment you descend into Town—that all too infrequent feeling when you know you're going to be glad you came. From a front desk actually focused on you to a room aglow in plush, sleek romanticism, Town revels in being all grown up. But the real forte is chef-owner Geoffrey Zakarian, who prepares subtle, sophisticated dishes like tuna in ramp-and-sea-urchin sauce, and duck steak with buckwheat pilaf. • 15 W. 56th St. (212-582-4445). (M–E)

Utsav Festive India
The $12.95 all-you-can-eat lunch buffet may be pricier than some, but the setting—an elevated bridge between two midtown office buildings—is posher, with tablecloths and flowers and gracious waiters wearing chili-pepper-patterned neckties. Every day brings a selection of four vegetable and three meat dishes, plus sal-

Opening

Cool Potato

As it turns out, man cannot live by yams alone: Hero's, the quirky Village Japanese fast-food joint singularly devoted to dishes made with starchy, pale-yellow-fleshed Japanese sweet potatoes, has expanded into a Korean bibimbop shop called **DoSirak**. Hero's owner Hirokazu Sakai is mired in visa troubles, which are forcing him to return to Japan next month. So to the rescue has come Suzy Yang, a Korean-American neighbor who bought the business from Sakai, redecorated, and introduced traditional Korean dishes like bibimbop and—echoing the former theme—jap chae bop, thin noodles made from sweet potatoes and sautéed with vegetables. Will Yang keep the sweet spuds all over the menu—even (our favorite) the baked tubers topped with peanut butter? "We will," she says between giggles. "There's a limited but very loyal sweet-potato clientele out there." (30 East 13th Street; 646-336-1685.)



PHOTOGRAPH BY CARINA SALVI.

ads, chutneys and pickles, nan, superb saffron-speckled rice, and silky-sweet Indian puddings for dessert. • 1185 Sixth Ave., nr. 46th St. (212-575-2525). (M)

57th–60th Streets

★ Alain Ducasse at the Essex House
The epitome of posh, from the decorous welcome to the postprandial lollipop cart, Ducasse's American outpost has found its groove. And even if a $160 dinner doesn't become a weekly habit, the extravagantly Art Deco cocoon of a room should be experienced at least once, as should the obsessively seasonal menus, the cheese course, and the high-concept wine list. The twice-weekly $65 lunch is, relatively speaking, a steal. • 155 W. 58th St. (212-265-7300). (E)

The Manhattan Ocean Club
Savor your seafood in an elegant dining room decorated with Picasso ceramics. A pictorial menu features a dozen or so smiley-faced fish. Preparations range from classic (Dover sole meunière) to creative (grouper with roasted pineapple and black peppercorns). Or have the chef prepare your fish any way you like. • 57 W. 58th St. (212-371-7777). (E)

★ Nicole's
Restaurants in clothing stores are usually more amenity than attraction. But this minimalist-chic dining room in the basement of Nicole Farhi's boutique is a rare exception. Chef Annie Wayte is obsessed with seasonal produce, and changes her menu every six weeks to prove it. The less expensive bar menu changes *daily*. Which means one ought not to grow too attached to her grilled-scallop-and-fennel salad, or the fritto misto of wild striped bass, haricots verts, and artichoke hearts. • 10 E. 60th St. (212-223-2288). (E)

ONEc.p.s.
Alan Stillman, along with executive chef David Burke and designer Adam Tihany, has rewired the Plaza's Edwardian Room. Tihany has colored the oaken walls caramel and put huge scarlet lampshades on the chandeliers, and the irrepressible Burke has concocted a whimsical menu that includes a foie gras–spiked burger and a rack of lamb accompanied by shepherd's pie. The mosaic floors and ceiling remain untouched, and the view of Central Park is as grand as ever. • 1 Central Pk. So. (212-583-1111). (E)

Opia
Considering that Frederick Lesort and Antoine Blech have specialized in the sort of smoky nightspot (Frederick's, Jour et Nuit, Orienta) where the preferred greeting is the double-cheek kiss, it's no surprise that their first collaboration is in a hotel that appeals to transatlantic tourists. But even less physically affectionate locals might like exotica like Kobe steak, lobster cannelloni, and Moroccan couscous. • 130 E. 57th St. (212-688-3939). (M)

★ Shelly's New York
The latest Shelly Fireman production inhabits an old Automat space, ergo the "Horn & Hardart" creamed spinach and macaroni and cheese. Only the assimilative Fireman (of Brooklyn Diner fame) would offer towering shellfish platters and stone crabs flown in daily from Joe's in Miami Beach alongside miso-glazed halibut, chicken schnitzel, and a 50-ounce porterhouse steak cooked "Brooklyn style" and make it all work. • 104 W. 57th St. (212-245-2422). (M–E)

Above 60th Street, East Side

★ Atlantic Grill
This place is as Upper East Side as a jitney ride to Wainscott. Yet it also has a try-anything-once attitude toward seafood: Hey, buddy, we got a pan-Asian sushi bar, a wood-burning grill, a big lobster pot. Tell us what you want, and it's yours. On an avenue where the restaurants are as hard to tell apart as the clientele's khakis, Atlantic Grill's adroitness is more than a drop in the ocean. • 1341 Third Ave., nr. 76th St. (212-988-9200). (M)

The Boathouse in Central Park
Claim a table by a flowery umbrella on the pondside deck and give thanks to Frederick Olmsted and generations of park champions for preserving this precious greenery. The American menu leans toward fresh seafood like pan-roasted monkfish with spring onions and garlic confit, and seared wild striped bass. • E. 72nd St. and Park Drive N. (212-517-2233). (M–E)

Maine Lobster Seafood Restaurant
For a chunk of land surrounded by water, Manhattan surprisingly isn't known for its casual American seafood, the type of salt-water-scented fare that defines New England dining. Maine Lobster hopes to change all that with its across-the-board seafood menu of stone crabs, "very crabby" crab cakes, lobster rolls, pan-seared scallops, and steamed lobster. • 1631 Second Ave., nr. 85th St. (212-327-4800). (M)

Nino's
Elegant Italian with a romantic mural garden and nightly live entertainment. Try the grilled dishes—tuna on a bed of balsamic onions, double-cut veal chop—or the lobster fra diavolo. • 1354 First Ave., nr. 72nd St. (212-988-0002). (E)

★ Park Avenue Cafe
A polished, countrified American café for business lunches and get-to-know-yous in the evening. Chef David Burke makes the tired catchall "American fare" sing, and keeps the neighbors rapt with signature dishes like salmon pastrami with crushed pepper. • 100 E. 63rd St. (212-644-1900). (E)

★ The Post House
How grand can a steakhouse get? If you took a meat-and-potatoes guy who liked to hang out at the Art Student's League, gave him a few years at Princeton, and financed his *Wanderjahr* abroad, he might come home and open the Post House. It's clubby but not snooty, with a Christo here and a Twombly there, and a well-traveled menu that includes everything from a Cajun rib steak to venison osso buco. • 28 E. 63rd St., in the Lowell Hotel (212-935-2888). (E)

Rain East
Like its Upper West Side sibling, the spices at this East Side branch are slightly tamed for American consumption, more fragrant than fiery, but that doesn't detract from the appeal of dishes like Thai chicken-and-coconut soup, pad Thai, and curried beef. • 1059 Third Ave., near 62nd St. (212-223-3669). (M)

Trata
With its fish-market display, its Greek spreads and salads, and its simply grilled seafood, this bustling Upper East Side restaurant offers an affordable, less dramatic alternative to Estiatorio Milos, where the chef used to work. • 1331 Second Ave., nr. 70th St. (212-535-3800). (M)

★ Viareggio
At first glance, there's little to distinguish this dining room. But the kitchen's another story. Chef Donato Deserio's deft touch with pastas reinvigorates old standards, and entrées like a subtle Parmigiano-Reggiano-crusted chicken breast in white wine taste almost new. As does the *amuse-bouche* of spicy tomato salsa, served with crispy fried-cheese wafers. • 1347 Second Ave., at 71st St. (212-585-2900). (M)

Above 60th Street, West Side

★ Calle Ocho
Who'd a thunk it? That the West Side could ever boast a restaurant as uncalculatingly sexy as Calle Ocho, with its far wall's spectacular Caribbean sunset of glazed terra cotta and its jewel-toned banquettes curving through the space like waves along the gulf? Let a staff so winning you at first suspect they're a few mojitos ahead of you steer you towards tangy lobster seviche, seafood paella, and terrific yuca fries. • 446 Columbus Ave., near 81st St. (212-873-5025). (M–E)

Compass
After the beating this place took as Marika, the new management kept the chef—Lespinasse alum Neil Annis—but changed the name, and made just enough minor renovations to justify a relaunch. This time out, the idea is for the food (confit of Alaskan king salmon, roast rabbit and grits) to garner as much attention as the design. • 208 W. 70th St. (212-875-8600). (E)

Corner
A nicely appointed neighborhood restaurant as inviting as its name and the warm glow from its copper sconces. Chef Maurice Hurley's pleasing, something-for-everyone menu includes grilled smoked sausage, Atlantic salmon, and Vietnamese tuna with red cabbage and shiitake mushrooms. • 461 Columbus Ave., at 82nd St. (212-875-1619). (M)

★ Jean Georges
Are you ready for an amazing evening that is not about you? Nothing and no one at Jean Georges steals center stage from the wondrous creations of Jean-Georges Vongerichten. If you're okay with such divine supplication, prepare to be open-mouthed whenever you're not chewing. Nothing you encounter will fail to dazzle, from the simplest dish of asparagus and morels au jus to the unexpected combo of sweetbreads en cocotte with ginger and licorice. • 1 Central Park West (212-299-3900). (E)

★ Max SoHa
This charming offshoot of Max, the perennially cramped East Village trattoria, has settled in a previously broccoli-rabe-bereft Morningside Heights neighborhood. The cooking—hearty rigatoni with meatballs and Italian sausage, toasted garlic bread with anchovies, osso buco—is as good as it is at Max downtown, so, at least until the competition arrives, you can take your waiter's word for it when he announces that this is the best tirami su around. • 1274 Amsterdam Ave., at 123rd St. (212-531-2221). (I–M) ($)

★ Ouest
After cultivating a coterie of foodie followers at places like Alison on Dominick and Cascabel, Tom Valenti brings his distinctive style of boldly layered flavors—and those lamb shanks—to a neighborhood legendarily short on sophisticated grub. Clearly, he's doing his darnedest to turn the tide with reprises of old favorites like potato, goat cheese, and truffle terrine with transcendent beets; and lusty short rib on an ooze of polenta perfumed with smoked onions. • 2315 Broadway, near 84th St. (212-580-8700). (M–E)

Restaurant 222
Cozy and romantic, with the feel of a townhouse, Frank Valenza's top-rated New American West Sider is a luxurious surprise in a neighborhood nearly bereft of them. The menu is full of high-ticket items like Beluga caviar, Kobe steak, truffles, and foie gras, which makes the $29.95 pretheater dinner, available from 5 to 6:30, a great deal. • 222 W. 79th St. (212-799-0400). (E)

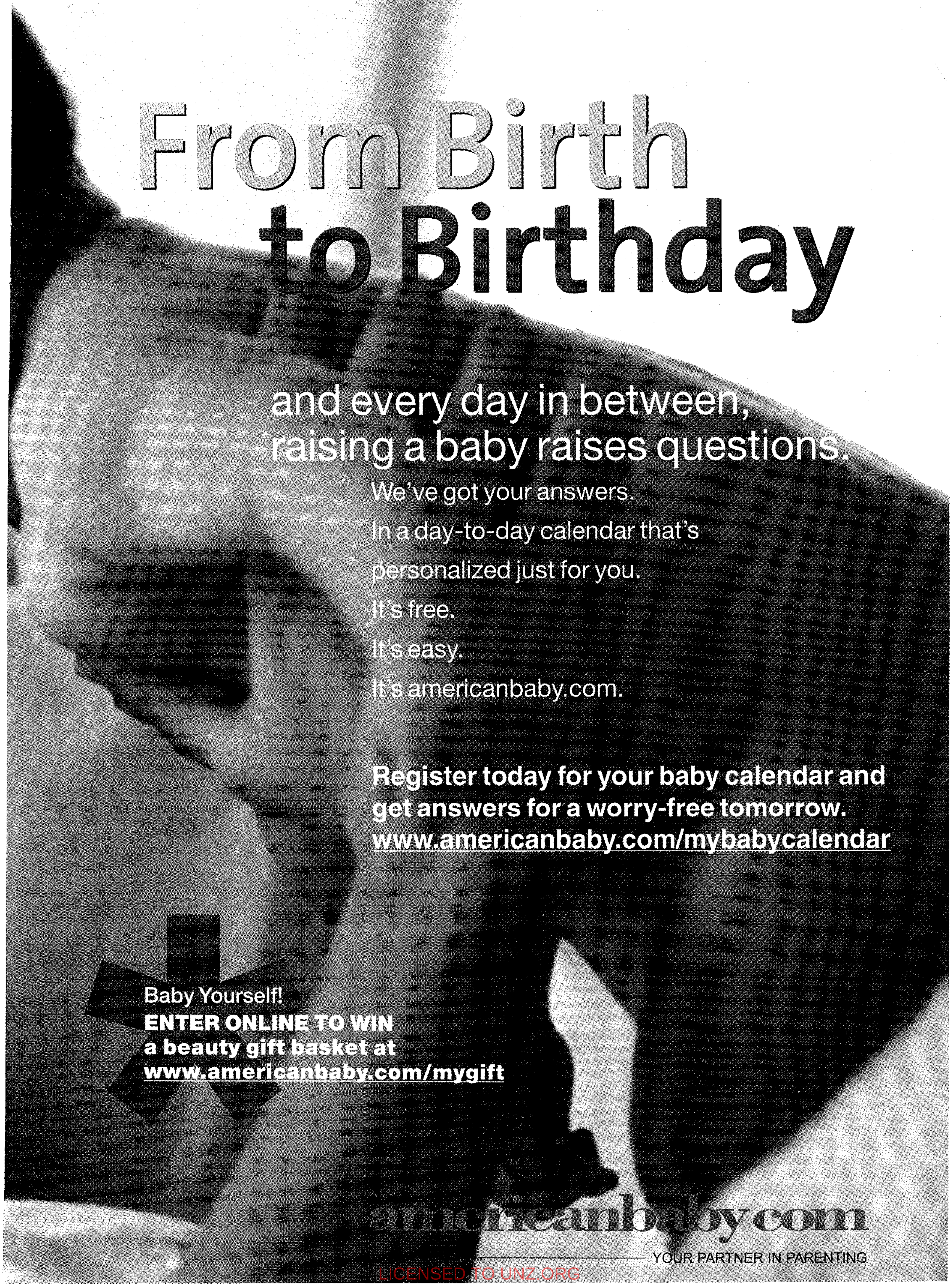
Scaletta
A dining room decorated in muted blues and pinks is the tranquil setting for refined Northern Italian fare, from smoked salmon and beef carpaccio to a selection of risotto and veal dishes. Conveniently located across the street from those famous dinosaurs at the Museum of Natural History. • 50 W. 77th St. (212-769-9191). (M)

Brooklyn

★ Locanda Vini & Olii
A beautifully restored 130-year-old Clinton Hill pharmacy complete with apothecary drawers and rolling ladders right out of Henry Higgins's library is the charming backdrop for this terrific Tuscan restaurant. Two young chefs recruited from Italy turn out uncommon antipasti and salads; main dishes like rabbit civet; and a wealth of exquisitely sauced pastas like carrot maltagliati with fava beans. The excellent house wines are sold "consumption"-style. The bottle is left on the table, you help yourself, and whatever's left is theatrically measured with a homemade stick. • 129 Gates Ave. (718-622-9202). (M)

Queens

★ La Porteña Restaurant y Parrillada
This former butcher shop in Jackson Heights is where homesick Buenos Aireans (and insatiable carnivores of every nationality) congregate for serious beefsteaks. Try the $14.95 mixed grill for one (actually more like two, maybe three): a feast of succulent garlicky pork sausages; hefty blood sausages; a rich, beefy-flavored skirt steak; tender short ribs; luscious sweetbreads; and mildly flavored tripe. • 74-25 37th Avenue (718-458-8111). (I–M)



From Birth
to Birthday

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cue

Nightlife

Edited by Ethan Brown

Concerts

Bonnie Raitt
4/25 at 8. Raitt can be an unusually penetrating songwriter—see "I Can't Make You Love Me"—but like a lot of Grammy-approved rockers, she can be far too conservative. A new album, *Silver Lining,* falls into the latter category. • Beacon Theatre, Broadway and 74th St. (212-307-7171); $42–$62.

Garbage
4/24 at 8. Shirley Manson and Co. gave us alt rock so weighed down by fashion, posing, and utterly silly pretension toward transgression (see "Queer") that it unintentionally parodied the nineties sense of coolness better than *Zoolander* ever did. But their most recent album, *Beautiful Garbage,* does the inexcusable: It's simply boring. • Roseland Ballroom, 239 W. 52nd St. (212-307-7171) $30.

Paul McCartney
4/26–4/27 at 8. • Madison Square Garden, Seventh Ave. and 34th St. (212-307-7171); $54.50–$254.50.

Spiritualized
With Black Rebel Motor Cycle Club. 4/24 at 8. • Beacon Theater, Broadway and 74th St. (212-307-7171) $37–$52.

Performance

Gray Lady

Suzanne Vega (pictured) is sitting, though not, as it turns out, "in the morning / at the diner / on the corner," but rather in the evening, at the bistro, directly across the street from Tom's famous diner. Nevertheless, lately Vega has returned, geographically and artistically, to her roots, so it's fitting that the setting for one of her early hits is within view. "I'm right around the corner from where I grew up," she says. "It's not as edgy, but that's fine with me right now." Vega moved back uptown with her young daughter about a year ago, following her split from spouse and producer Mitchell Froom. "I'd separated from my husband, sold my apartment on Canal Street, changed managers and record labels," she says. "It took a while before I felt stable enough to sit down and write." The result, *Songs in Red and Gray,* is a clear-eyed dissection of the end of a marriage, as precise and haunting as her best work. But releasing even a great divorce album felt "weird" right after September 11. "All of a sudden, your own personal problems just seemed very small and extremely insignificant," says Vega. Still, she'll be performing her songs this week at the Bottom Line, while also promoting *Vigil,* a benefit CD for victims of the World Trade Center attack that collects songs on that subject—including one of hers—by the members of the Greenwich Village Songwriters' Exchange, folkie Jack Hardy's long-running workshop. "I thought it was so big that everybody would be really mute about it," says Vega, who is executive producer. "Instead, all these things were pouring out, and from some very interesting angles. Some of these songs are so beautiful." (See "Small Stages.") GEORGE KALOGERAKIS

Stone Temple Pilots
4/23 at 8. It's easy to blame Eddie Vedder for all the mush-mouthed post-grunge dopes crowding the pop charts, but a much better place to direct your ire is Scott Weiland of Stone Temple Pilots, whose gargling heroin drone led the way for incomprehensible rockers everywhere. • Hammerstein Ballroom, 311 W. 34th St. (212-307-7171); $39.50.

Small Stages

B.B. King Blues Club & Grill
4/24: Dave Davies. 4/25: Ice-T. 4/26: The Turtles. 4/27: Mickey B's Golden Oldies Spectacular. 4/30: Peter Green. • 243 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144).

Bottom Line
4/24: Mediaeval Baebes. 4/25–4/26: Suzanne Vega (see box). 4/27: David Johansen and the Harry Smiths. 4/29: "Let Freedom Sing!" with the Mahotella Queens; Dorothy Masuku; Thomas Mapfumo. • 15 W. 4th St. (212-228-6300).

Bowery Ballroom
4/23: Alkaline Trio. 4/24: The Church. 4/25–4/26: Wilco. 4/30–5/1: Flickerstick. • 6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111).

Fez
Thursdays: Mingus Big Band. Through 5/13: Anthony Rapp. • Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette St. (212-533-2680).

Irving Plaza
4/24: Super Furry Animals. 4/26: Greg Brown. 4/27: Soulive. 4/30: "Eating It." 5/1: Down. • 17 Irving Pl. (212-777-6800).

Joe's Pub
4/23: Oliver Mtukudzi. 4/24: Chocolate Genius. 4/25: Ben Munisteri Dance Projects. 4/26: Rosa Passos. 4/27: Shirley Chickenpants. 4/28: Babe; DK Dyson. 4/29–4/30: Curtis Stigers. 5/1: David Yazbek. • 425 Lafayette St. (212-239-6200).

Knitting Factory
4/23: Neil Halstead. 4/25: Josh Rouse; Jay Bennett. 4/26: Denali; Ursula 1000. 4/27: Cranes; Michael J. Sheehy. 4/29: Erik Truffaz. 4/30: Michael Blake's Elevated Quartet. 5/1: Billy Nayer show. • 74 Leonard St. (212-219-3055). $.

Maxwell's
4/26: Josh Rouse; Paul Ruderman. 4/27: Joe Pernice; Jay Bennett. 4/28: The Von Bondies. 4/30: Hoggboy. • 1039 Washington St., Hoboken, N.J. (201-653-1703).

Mercury Lounge
4/26: Freeloader. 4/27: The Von Bondies. 4/29: The Days of the New. 4/30: Marah. 5/1–5/2: Yeah Yeah Yeahs. • 217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700).

Northsix
4/25: DMX Crew; D.J. Unknown. 4/26: Radio 4. 4/27: Heroine Sheiks. 4/28: Piebald; Apollo Sunshine. 4/29: Candiria; Burnt by the Sun. 5/1: Eli Janney; Linda Lamb. • 66 N. 6th St., Brooklyn (718-599-5103).

S.O.B.'s
4/24: Talib Kweli. 4/25: "Groove Addiction." 4/26: Julie Dexter. 4/27: "Samba Saturday." 4/29: "La Tropica Monday." 4/30: *High Times* presents: Black Moon; Afu-Ra; Non Phixion. 5/1: Blackalicious. • 204 Varick St. (212-243-4940).

The Village Underground
4/23: Teddy Thompson. 4/24: Heavy; the Brother Jacque Project. 4/25: My Brother's Dream; the Martin Rivas 3. 4/26: Liquid Soul. • 130 W. 3rd St. (212-777-7745).

"Warsaw"
4/26: The Rapture. • Polish National Home, 261 Driggs Ave., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (toll-free, 866-468-7619).

Clubs

APT
An apartment-themed lounge with a surprisingly good lineup of hip-hop, soul, and house D.J.'s. Mondays: Bobbito Garcia. Tuesdays: Jaymz Nylon. Wednesdays: *Fader* magazine presents Rich Medina. Thursdays: Small Change. Fridays: Ursula 1000. Saturdays: Chairman Mao and Citizen Kane. • 419 W. 13th St. (212-414-4245).

★ "Bang the Party"
Lori and E-Man's sweaty Friday-night house party returns to Manhattan after several years at Frank's Lounge in Brooklyn. Expect lots of tambourine-toting dancers and plenty of house and disco classics. 4/26: E-man spins with Camacho. • Opaline, 85 Ave. A (212-726-1322); $10.

Centro-Fly
Fridays: "GBH" hosts some of the more adventurous nights at the club with D.J.'s like Ashley Beedle and Marshall Jefferson. Saturdays: Energetic house and big beat with "Plant"; in the Pinky Room, Chez Music honcho Neil Aline hosts "We and the Music." Sundays: The Chelsea boys sweat out Saturdays toxins at "Drama at Large!" with D.J. Victor Calderone. 4/23: Airy, atmospheric drum and bass with LTJ Bukem. • 45 W. 21st St. (212-627-7770).

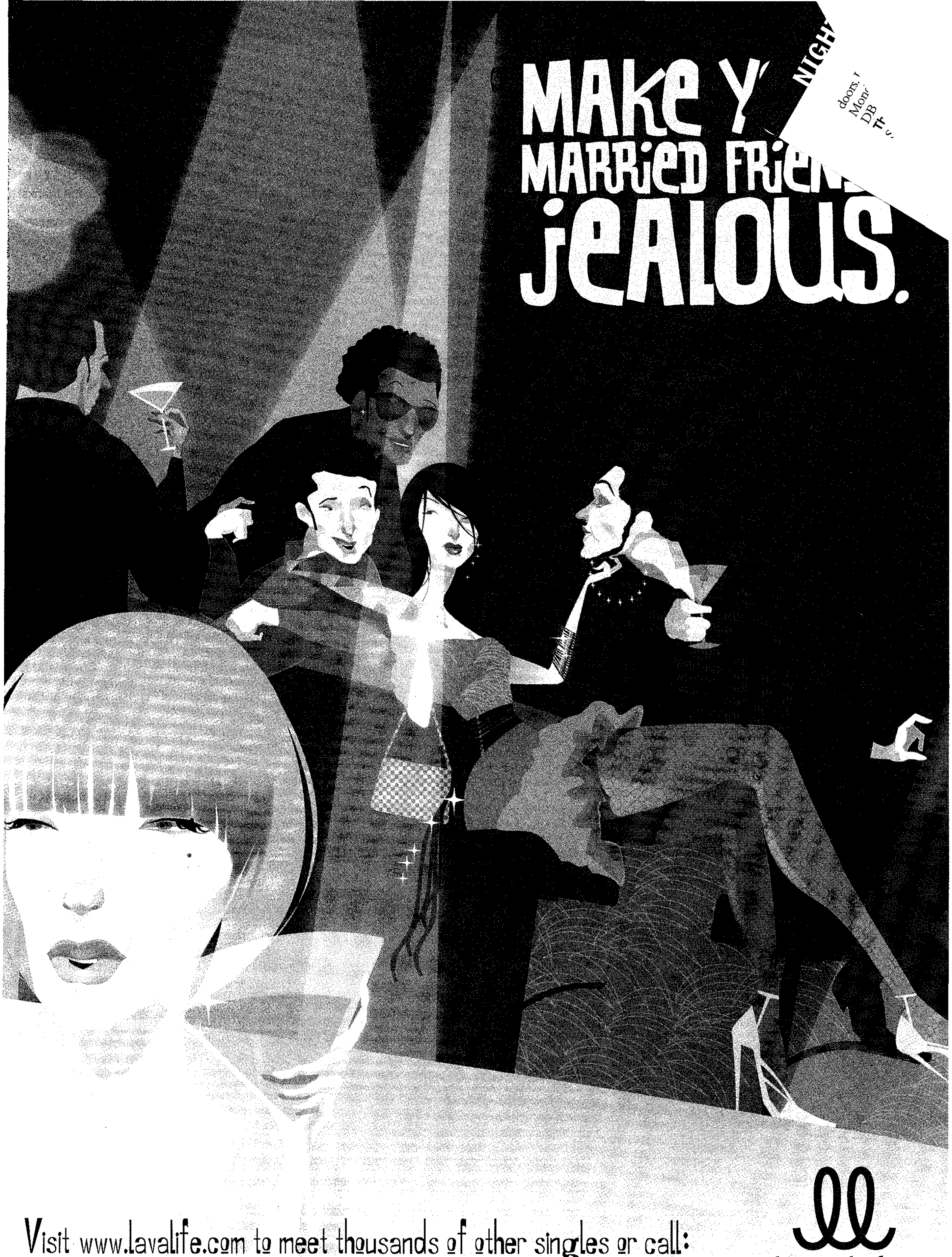
★ Club Shelter
Thursdays: Muscular, macho house music—one producer in this camp even calls himself Thick Dick—from Subliminal Records. Saturdays: Timmy Regisford's long-running deep-house party "Shelter." 4/25: D.C.-based progressive-house duo Deep Dish. 4/30: "Lazy Dog" with D.J. Ben Watt (see box). • Club Shelter, 20 W. 39th St. (212-439-4141). $.

Luxx
Fridays: "Mutants" with D.J. Larry Tee. Saturdays: D.J. Larry Tee spins electroclash at "Berliniamsburg." Sundays: "House Music Sessions" with D.J. Raji K and D.J. Gomi. Sundays: More Larry Tee with "NYFC." Mondays: "Cult Movie Mondays." Tuesdays: D.J. Miss Guy spins rock and metal at "Hell Bent for Brooklyn." • 256 Grand St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn (718-599-1000).

The Mint
Fridays: "Spirit of Ibiza." Sundays: "Candy Store," promoter Derek Corley's hip-hop throw-down, which has already seen the likes of Suge Knight pass through its

Ground Rules In clubland, promptness is *not* next to godliness; expect shows to start later than promised. Stars (★) indicate our editors' recommendations. $ = cash only.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS FLOYD/CAMERA PRESS/RETNA, LTD.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in the downstairs area, dubbed the "Bass Mint": days, drum and bass with Breakbeat Science D.J.'s and Dara. • 225 E. Houston St. (212-475-3200).

e Roxy
aturdays: The Chelsea boys dance all night to a rotating set of house D.J.'s, including Razor of Razor and Guido. • 515 W. 18th St. (212-627-0404).

SPA
Wednesdays: Rock and roll and electro spun by D.J.'s like Paul Sevigny. Thursdays: A-listers and fashionistas take over with "Ultra," featuring hip-hop, house, and rock and roll spun by D.J.'s Mark Ronson, Lady Bunny, Cameron Douglas. Saturdays: Overdressed Euros line up for "Jet Set" with D.J. Eric LaPeau. • 76 E. 13th St. (212-388-1060).

Vinyl
Fridays: "Be Yourself" with progressive-house maestro D.J. Danny Tenaglia. Sundays: François K, Joe Claussell, and Danny Krivit spin at the now legendary afternoon party "Body & Soul." • 6 Hubert St. (212-343-1379).

Jazz

Birdland
Sundays in April: Chico O'Farrill Afro-Cuban Jazz Big Band; Mondays, early: The Scott Whitfield Jazz Orchestra; Mondays, late: Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra featuring Lew Tabackin; Tuesdays, early: David Ostwald's Louis Armstrong Centennial Band; Tuesdays, late: Duke Ellington Orchestra directed by Paul Mercer Ellington; Fridays: Lew Anderson's All-American Big Band. 4/25–4/27: John Hicks and Elise Wood Quintet featuring Joe Lovano. 5/1: Lynne Arriale Trio. • 315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080).

Blue Note
4/23–4/28: Chucho Valdes. • 131 W. 3rd St. (212-475-8592).

Iridium
Monday nights, the Les Paul Quartet holds office hours. 4/23–4/28: Ahmad Jamal. 4/30–5/5: Kenny Garrett Quartet. Sets Sun.–Thurs. at 8:30 and 10:30, with extra midnight set Fri. and Sat. • 1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-582-2121).

★ "Jazz Insights: The Vocalists"
Music-and-lecture series hosted by Arnold Jay Smith. 4/23: Ruth Brisbane • New School, 66 W. 12th St. (212-229-5690). $35.

★ "Jazz Rhythms, New Visions: A Tribute to Jazz Legend Clark Terry"
With Arturo Sandoval, Jon Faddis, Nicholas Payton, Diane Reeves, Marion McPartland, Jimmy Owens, Danny Moore, Warren Vache, and Randy Brecker. Hosted by Ossie Davis. 4/23 at 8. • Riverside Church, 91 Claremont Ave., nr. 120th St. (212-870-6784). $125 for concert only; $200 for concert and reception; $300 for preferred seating and program acknowledgment. Concert benefits the Riverside Youth Jazz Scholarship Project.

D.J. Set

High Wattage

Ben Watt (pictured) is best known as one half of the fashionably distressed British popsters Everything but the Girl, but he's also become something of a phenom in the deep-house scene thanks to his "Lazy Dog" parties in London. On April 30, Watt brings his formidable D.J. skills and song-driven sensibility—which disdains the overt musicality that mucks up deep house these days—to Club Shelter. (See "Clubs.")

★ Jazz Standard
4/23–4/28: Masters of Groove. Sets at 7:30 and 9:30. (See box.) • 116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232).

Red Blazer
Mondays and Tuesdays: Sam Ulano's Jazz Band. Wednesdays: Felix Swing Band; Alan Russell Big Jazz Band. Thursdays: Stan Rubin's Big Swing Band. Fridays: Simon Wettenhall's Oceanic Dixieland Band. Saturdays: Bob Cantwell's Dixie & Swing Band. • 32 W. 37th St. (212-947-6428).

Rose Center
In April: Gary Bartz Ensemble. The Rose Center is open until 8:45. Suggested admission price is $10 for adults, $7.50 for students and seniors, $6 for children. Performances take place every Friday from 5:45 to 6:45 and 7:15 to 8:15. • Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St. (212-769-5100).

Small's
Extremely cozy and open all night, offering after-hours jazz until 8 A.M. It's a candlelit basement whose nightly jams start round about 2 A.M.—the perfect time for a post–Village Vanguard visit (it's right around the corner)—and often involve free beverages and food. • 183 W. 10th St. (212-929-7565).

Smoke
Sundays in April: Chris Washburne and Syotos. Mondays: Jam Session with John Farnsworth. Tuesdays: "Hammond B3 Organ Grooves." Wednesdays: Hot Pants Funk Sextet Plus One. Thursdays: Jim Rotondi and David Hazeltine's Electric Band. • 2751 Broadway, at 105th St. (212-864-6662).

Tonic
Sundays: "Klezmer Sundays." 4/23: Satoko Fuji Quartet. 4/26: Vinicius Cantuaria. 4/27: Marty Ehrlich, Mark Dresser, and Andrew Cyrille. 4/28: Rose Thomson. 4/29: Judy Elkan and Kristen Kosmas' Little Theatre. • 107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503). $.

Village Vanguard
Mondays in April: The Vanguard Jazz Orchestra swings on. 4/23–4/28: Lou Donaldson Quartet. • 178 Seventh Ave. So. (212-255-4037). $.

Comedy

Carolines on Broadway
Mondays, "New Talent Night," hosted by Eddie Brill. 4/23: Hot 97's Phat Tuesday. 4/24: Full Frontal with Julie Goldman. 4/26–4/27: Christopher Titus. $12.50–$24.50; two-drink minimum. • 1626 Broadway, nr. 49th St. (212-757-4100).

Comedy Cellar
Through 4/29: Colin Quinn; Nick DiPaolo; Godfrey; Jim Norton; Greer Barnes. • 117 MacDougal St. (212-254-3480).

Dangerfield's
Through 4/28: Rob Magnotti; Gregory Carey; Gregory Rogell; Billy Burr; Richie Byrne. Shows Fri. at 9 and 11:15; Sat. at 8, 10:30, and 12:30 A.M.; Sun.–Thurs., continuous from 8:45. Cover is $15 Fri. and Sat. ($20 for 10:30 Sat. show), $12.50 on weeknights; no minimum. • 1118 First Ave., nr. 61st St. (212-593-1650).

Cabaret

Algonquin Hotel
4/30–5/25: Karen Akers in "When Love Speaks to You." (Early shows Tues.–Sat., late shows Fri. and Sat.) • 59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800).

Cafe Carlyle
Every Monday, Woody Allen swings through the early set with Eddy Davis & His New Orleans Jazz Band at 8:45. Through 5/4: James Naughton. • Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600).

Don't Tell Mama
Thursdays at 6: "Seth's Broadway Chatterbox." Fridays at 8: "The Next Big Broadway Musical!" Fridays at 10:30: Gay and Lesbian Comedy Fest. Saturdays at 11: Tommy Femia in "Judy Garland Live!" • 343 W. 46th St. (212-757-0788). $.

Judy's
4/23: Ricky Ritzel in "If You Were Wondering." 4/24: Marcus Kettle in "Feelin' Groovy: Confessions of a 60s Love Child." 4/25: Debbie Lesser with David Brunetti. 4/26: Diana Templeton. 4/27: David Sabella. 4/28: Audrey Lavine in "Simply Lavine." 4/29: Rick Peets in "If You Were Wondering." 4/30: Courtney Kenny. 5/1: Marcus Kettle in "Feelin' Groovy: Confessions of a 60s Love Child." • 169 Eighth Ave. nr. 18th St. (212-929-5410).

★ Neue Galerie New York
New cabaret series off to a promising start; the first night featured Ute Lemper. 4/26: Theo Bleckmann, with Kirk Nurock, piano. • 1048 Fifth Ave., at 86th St. (212-628-6200).

Club Date

Groove Thing

From jazzman John Scofield's embrace of the jam-band scene to Medeski Martin and Wood's concert with turntablist Kid Koala, cross-genre groovers are all the rage lately. So it's no surprise that **Masters of Groove**—an ensemble led by (pictured, left to right) Blue Note organist supreme Reuben Wilson, James Brown drummer Bernard "Pretty" Purdie, and hard-bop guitarist Grant Green Jr., who've tackled such decidedly non-jazzy material as James Bond soundtracks—are taking over the Jazz Standard from April 23 to 28. (See "Jazz.")

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PHOTOGRAPHS: FROM TOP, RICHARD HOUGHTON; JACOB KAZMA.

Classical & Dance

Edited by Alicia Zuckerman

Classical Music

★ Collegiate Chorale
Robert Bass conducts the concert version of Weber's opera, *Oberon*, closing the sixtieth season with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the marvelous soprano Deborah Voigt, and other soloists. 4/23 at 8. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (917-322-2140); $15–$75.

★ Alfred Brendel, Piano
Only New York recital includes works by Mozart, Schubert, and Brahms. 4/24 at 7:30. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $22–$89.

"Traveling the Silk Road"
Carnegie Hall–sponsored free series continues with the Bukharan Jewish folk and classical music of Ensemble Maqam, 4/24 at 1; the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York, 4/28 at 3. • 4/24: Brooklyn Public Library, Brighton Beach Branch, 16 Brighton 1st Rd. (718-946-2917). 4/28: Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Terrace, Staten Island (718-448-2500); free.

★ Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Violin
With the Assad brothers—Sérgio and Odair—on guitar, performs Argentine and Romanian dances and Gypsy songs. 4/24 at 8. • Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (212-570-3949); $35.

★ Eos Orchestra
Tan Dun leads the New York premiere of his *Crouching Tiger Concerto* for cello, orchestra, and film, with footage by director Ang Lee. Also, works by John Cage. 4/25 and 2/27 at 8. • Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. (212-691-6415); $25–$50.

★ Musica Sacra Chorus and Orchestra
Present Dave Brubeck's *To Hope! A Celebration*, a Roman mass, and *Pange Lingua Variations*, with the Dave Brubeck Quartet. 4/25 at 8. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $15–$85.

New York Philharmonic
Sir Colin Davis conducts an all-Sibelius program. 4/25–4/27 at 8. • Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $21–$82.

★ Brooklyn Philharmonic
Bright Sheng's *Tibetan Swing*, written for this orchestra and based on poems by Li Po, has its world premiere, with Sheng's striking *Nanking! Nanking!* and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. Robert Spano conducts. 4/26–4/27 at 8. • Brooklyn Academy of Music, Gilman Opera House , 30 Lafayette Ave. (718-636-4100); $20–$50.

Riverside Choral Society
All-Beethoven concert includes *Missa Solemnis* and *Consecration of the House Overture*. 4/27 at 8. • Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $20–$45.

★ Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
Mariss Jansons conducts two New York premieres: Michael Hersh's Symphony No. 2 and Christopher Rouse's *Rapture*. Also, Mozart's Requiem features soprano Hei-Kyung Hong and the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh. 4/30 at 8. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $22–$89.

"Perspectives: Gidon Kremer"
Violinist-conductor leads Kremerata Baltica in works by Arvo Pärt, Leonid Desyatnikov, and composer-pianist Lera Auerbach. 4/1 at 8. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $20–$74.

★ New York Festival of Song
Presents *Killer B's*, a celebration of American songwriters Barber, Berlin, Bernstein, Blizstein, and Bowles. 5/1 at 8. • Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College, Lexington Ave. and 68th St. (646-230-8382); $33.

Opera

★ Metropolitan Opera
Il Barbiere di Siviglia closes 4/26. Harbison's *The Great Gatsby* opens 4/29. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Sly* are also onstage. Call for details, or visit www.metopera.org. • Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center (212-362-6000); $25–$265.

★ New York City Opera
Final week includes Sousa's *The Glass Blowers*, Handel's *Agrippina*, *Tosca* and *Carmen*. Call for details, or visit www.nycopera.com. • New York State Theater, Lincoln Center (212-870-5570); $25–$98.

★ Chicago Opera Theater
Monteverdi cycle wraps up with *Orfeo*, based on the Greek myth of a musician who follows his lover into the underworld after her death. 4/22, 4/24, 4/26–4/27 at 7:30. • Brooklyn Academy of Music, Harvey Theater, 651 Fulton St. (718-636-4100); $30–$80.

Juilliard Opera Center
Presents the world premiere of Stephen Paulus's *Heloise and Abelard*, based on the letters of twelfth-century French scholar Paul Abelard and his lover. Look for the gorgeous wire sculptures. 4/24, 4/27, and 2/29 at 8. • Juilliard Theater, Lincoln Center (212-769-7406); $20.

DiCapo Opera
Presents Pietro Mascagni's rarely heard *L'Amico Fritz*. 4/26–4/27 at 8; 4/28 at 4. • Dicapo Opera Theatre, 184 E. 76th St. (212-288-9438); $40.

Cosmopolitan Symphony Orchestra
Pablo Zinger leads concert version of Barbieri's zarzuela opera, *El Barberillo de Lavapiés*, combining bel canto with traditional Spanish rhythms. 4/28 at 3. • The Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. (212-840-2824); $30–$35.

"Dennis Cleveland"
Hello, Cleveland! American Mikel Rouse's new opera is a spoof on the TV talk show, featuring Rouse in the title role. 5/1–5/4 at 8; 5/4–5/5 at 3. • John Jay College Theater, Amsterdam Ave. and 58th St. (212-721-6500); $45.

Dance

★ Ballet Tech
Premieres include *Skandia*, with four couples dancing to Nordic folk music; *Pianola*, set to Conlon Nancarrow's player-piano rolls; and *Lincoln Portrait*, a celebration of American diversity. Also, the 1967 *At Midnight*, set to Mahler. Through 5/5. Call for details. • The Joyce Theater, Eighth Ave. at 19th St. (212-242-0800); $25.

Ann Carlson
Performs *Too Beautiful for a Day*, a memoir and meditation on the flag and morality. 4/24, 5/1–5/2 at 9. • Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (212-864-5400; $21.

★ "Seguiriya: The Heart Beats"
(See box.) 4/25–5/12. • La MaMa ETC, 74A E. 4th St. (212-475-7710); $15.

★ Batsheva Dance Company
Israeli contemporary-dance company presents the U.S. premiere of *Naharin's Virus*, adapted from Peter Handke's 1966 absurdist play, *Offering the Audience*. 4/30; 5/2–5/4 at 7:30. • Brooklyn Academy of Music, Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave. (718-636-4100); $20–$45.

★ New York City Ballet
Spring season opens with an all-Balanchine program on 4/30. Robbins's *In G Major*, set to Ravel, returns to the repertoire on 5/1. Call for details, or visit www.nycballet.com. • New York State Theatre, Lincoln Center (212-870-5570); $28–$76.

Ground Rules This section emphasizes classical concerts, recitals, and outdoor performances (but only the premeditated ones), and includes the occasional jazz concert if it is held, say, in a public space. Stars (★) indicate our editors' recommendations. For rock concerts and club information, see "Nightlife."

Performance

Sweet Suga

"Flamenco is very popular in Japan," says Shigeko Suga, a Japanese-born member of La MaMa Experimental Theater Club's Great Jones Repertory Company. Still, it wasn't until 1987—when she encountered some itinerant dancers on the beach in Spain one starry night—that she became taken with the form. Later, *butoh*, the Japanese dance form at times marked by barely perceptible movements, piqued her interest, and she began choreographing works using both (she hears in each of them the rhythm of the heart, she explains). The latest, *Seguiriya: The Heart Beats*, inspired by Arthur Kopit's play *Wings* and by her late mother's illness, is a dance drama about a vibrant flamenco dancer who suffers a stroke and her ensuing inner dialogue (pictured, left to right, Mieko Seto and Naomi Shibata). Lyrics are drawn from her mother's journal and sung in English, Spanish, and Japanese. Suga candidly acknowledges the conflicting emotions one experiences when dealing with a loved one's illness—she recalls laughing at her mother's bedside. "It's part of us, sickness. And death is part of us," she says. "The real challenge, I think, is to make something out of expressions, memories—a thousand moments common with all persons." Performances, by Indalo Artists, begin Thursday at La MaMa. (See "Dance.")

A.Z.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL DRAPER.

TheMix

Edited by Boris Kachka

Radio Highlights

Anne Perry
The author of *Southampton Row* talks to the eponymous host of "The Lewis Burke Frumkes Show." • 4/28 at 8 P.M. WPAT, 930 AM.

"New York & Company"
Two Brooklyn authors talk to host Leonard Lopate about spies. Newcomer Robert Littell discusses his CIA novel, *The Company*, and veteran Norman Mailer joins *Into the Mirror* author Lawrence Schiller to talk about Robert Hanssen. • 4/30 at noon. WNYC, 820 AM and 93.9 FM.

Lectures and Panels

September 11 and the European Union
Dutch historian Maarten Brands talks about the divisions both within the fledgling union and between Europe and the United States over recent issues. • 4/24 at 6 P.M. New York Public Library, Margaret Liebman Forum, room 227, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (212-930-0084); free.

Boomers on Boomers
The baby boomers get all the attention for a change, at a panel featuring contemporaries Wendy Wasserstein, P. J. O'Rourke, and Kim Cattrall. • 4/24 at 8 P.M. The 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $22.

New York's Pennsylvania Stations
Art historian Hilary Ballon talks about both the defunct landmark and the future station, just as her picture book hits coffee tables. • 4/25 at noon. Municipal Art Society, 457 Madison Ave., at 50th St. (212-935-9727); free.

Robert Caro
The author of an ever-growing LBJ biography discusses his new volume, *Master of the Senate*. • 4/25 at 8 P.M. 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $22.

Conference on Creativity
"The Artist as Child: Roots of Creativity" features keynote speaker Oliver Sacks—whose memoir *Uncle Tungsten* chronicles his own childhood—and others like poet Louise Gluck and author-psychiatrist Lynn Reiser. • 4/27 at 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. French Institute Alliance Française, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160); $85.

"Elaine Stritch at Liberty"
A discounted performance of the hit one-woman show is followed by a discussion with Stritch moderated by *Times* culture reporter Peter Marks. • 4/28 at 5 P.M. Neil Simon Theater, 250 W. 52nd St. (212-307-4100, mention code JNYT428); $40 to $65.

"The Coming Geopolitical Challenge"
NYU professor Ralph Buutjens delivers one of a series of talks about the U.S. and the scary new global climate. • 4/28 at 7:30 P.M. The 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $22.

Bob Kerrey and Robert Rubin
The former senator interviews the former Treasury Secretary about the future of the world economy. • 4/30 at 7 P.M. New School, Swayduck Auditorium, 65 Fifth Ave., at 14th St. (212-229-5662, ext. 250); free.

The Written Word

Raul Correa
The novelist reads from his first book, *I Don't Know but I've Been Told*, on two occasions. (See box.) • 4/23 at 7:30 P.M. Barnes & Noble, 4 Astor Pl. (212-420-1322); free. 4/29 at 7 P.M. Half King, 505 W. 23rd St. (212-462-4300); free.

"Food for Thought"
The series of box-lunch readings continues, with Dorothy Parker's "The Waltz" and George Malko's "Where, O Where?" on Wednesday and Arthur Miller's "The Last Yankee" and Edward Pomerantz's "The Lesson" the following Monday. • 4/24 and 4/29 at 1 P.M. The National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park So. (212-362-2560); $35.

Chris Offutt
The critically acclaimed memoirist reads from a new first-person tale, *No Heroes*, about returning to his old Kentucky home. • 4/24 at 7:30 P.M. Barnes & Noble, 675 Sixth Ave., at 22nd St. (212-727-1227); free.

***Modern Humorist* Live**
The occasionally hilarious Website sponsors a night of comedy from the likes of Andy Borowitz, John Hodgman, and Seth Herzog, featuring plenty of *MH* skits and humor. • 4/24 at 7:30 and 9:30 P.M. Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St. (212-219-3006); $12 in advance, $15 at the door.

The Vermont Notebook
John Ashbery joins Elaine Equi and Anselm Berrigan to present poetry and art from *The Vermont Notebook*, a 1975 collaboration between Ashbery and artist Joe Brainard. • 4/24 at 8 P.M. The Poetry Project, 131 E. 10th St. (212-674-0910); $7.

"No Boundaries"
The Ying Quartet joins up with Leonard Nimoy and Sonia Manzano, who read along to new music by Paquito D'Rivera and old stuff by Dvořák—the debut of a three-part series. • 4/26 at 8:30 P.M. Symphony Space, Leonard Nimoy Thalia, 2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (212-864-5400); $16, $39 series.

Calvin Trillin
The *New Yorker* writer signs copies of his new book, *Tepper Isn't Going Out*. Free samples of Russ & Daughters' fish salads will be on tap. • 4/28 at noon. Russ & Daughters, 179 E. Houston St. (800-787-7229); free.

Ed Morales
The author of *Living in Spanglish: The Search for Latino Identity in America* talks about his survey of diverse cultures often lumped together. • 4/29 at 7:30 P.M. Barnes & Noble, 2289 Broadway, at 82nd St. (212-362-8835); free.

Ben Schrank
The young author who won praise for his first novel, *Miracle Man*, reads from his follow-up, *Consent*. • 4/29 at 7:30 P.M. Barnes & Noble, 4 Astor Pl. (212-420-1322); free.

"All I Can See From Where I Stood"
Edna St. Vincent Millay biographer Nancy Milford introduces a play about Millay's life—directed by Lynne Meadow and featuring Andrew McCarthy and Campbell Scott—part of the MTC's "Writers in Performance" series. • 4/29 at 8 P.M. Manhattan Theater Club, City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (212-399-3030); $15.

Richard Powers and John Barth
Two writers make a rare appearance. Barth presents his recent novel, *Coming Soon!!!*, and Powers—whose most recent book was *Plowing in the Dark*, reads from a forthcoming novel, *Time of Our Singing*. • 4/29 at 8 P.M. The 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $16.

Langston Hughes Tribute
Capping off a National Poetry Month in Hughes's honor, PEN American Center throws a final tribute in words and images with appearances by Paule Marshall, Ruby Dee, Ossie Davis, Margo Jefferson, Sonia Sanchez, and others. • 4/30 at 8 P.M. Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. (212-307-4100); $20 to $25.

Special Events

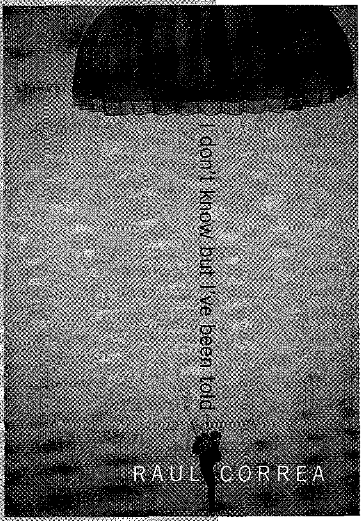
Tours

Tribeca Open Artist Studio Tour
More than 100 neighborhood artists who've weathered both gentrification and local catastrophe—by managing to pay their rent—show their wares in twenty studios open to the public for a free three-day self-guided tour. • 4/27–4/29, 1 to 6 P.M. (212-479-7322 or www.toastartwalk.com for maps); free.

In Print

Army Intelligence

"I'm not taking potshots at the military," says **Raul Correa**, whose first novel, *I Don't Know but I've Been Told* (HarperCollins; $24.95), reflects his own stint with the 82nd Airborne Division in the early eighties. "I love the Army—I needed it badly. But when I was there, it was a bit of a mess." Correa's nameless narrator, a doped-up tugboat operator who wanders Manhattan's far West Side in search of hookers, is also a bit of a mess, and his Army memories (stealing munitions, parachuting on mescaline, falling in love with a Colombian prostitute) might be the only thoughts keeping him sane. The novel began as a short story for a graduate class called "The Literature of Desperation." "I was saying good-bye to a part of my life, and maybe a part of the city, because a lot of it doesn't exist anymore," says the 40-year-old Correa, who finally quit drinking and drugging after earning a rare undergraduate scholarship to Columbia in 1988. "I'd get out from bartending around three in the morning, and there were other people out walking. They weren't going anywhere, they were just out walking something around, maybe walking a story around. And I thought, *Maybe that's the one good thing everybody's got.*" Having earned a fiction M.F.A., Correa teaches writing to high-school students and Rikers inmates. "I need to be around people who are experiencing that first impulse to write," he says. "That's what I want to hold on to, desperately." Correa reads on April 23 at Barnes & Noble Astor Place and April 29 at Half King. (See "The Written Word.") B.K.



Happening

Blossom Buddies

Japan's Sakura Matsuri—the **Cherry Blossom Festival**—developed over centuries of seasonal celebrations, but over a mere 21 years, the Brooklyn Botanic Garden has made it one of New York's most distinctive celebrations. Those checking the trees' progress over the Garden's Website (www.bbg.org/cherrywatch) already know some blossoms are peaking early in this year's irregular weather, but you needn't start your *hanami* (blossom viewing) along the glorious (and still budding) Cherry Esplanade until festival weekend, April 28 and 29. Parades, dances, and Japanese storytelling will keep the kids occupied while you learn about bonsai or origami or take in something a little more avant-garde, like an angst-ridden *butoh* performance. (See "Special Events.")

Central Park
A brief jaunt through the heart of the park is accompanied by a quick history of the struggle to create it. Call for the complete schedule of a panoply of free park tours. • 4/27 at 3 P.M. Meet at the Dairy, mid-park at 65th St. (212-794-6564); free.

Little Ukraine
An East Village tour focuses on one of its most enduring communities and its many surviving institutions, including St. George's Ukrainian Catholic Church, a textile embroidery shop that makes Easter eggs, and a bakery. • 4/27 at 5 P.M. Meet at the northwest corner of Second Ave. and 10th St. (212-265-2663); $5.

Downtown Deco
Architectural historian Matthew Postal leads a trip through the Art Deco and Moderne towers that transformed lower Manhattan along with the booming twenties stock market. • 4/28, 8:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. Call 212-415-5500 for tickets and meeting place; $20.

Benefits

"What a Glorious Evening!"
The Celeste Bartos Forum will look surprisingly glamorous for this Young Lions–sponsored gala—the theme being movies of the fifties (and the focus being on the Performing Arts library's film holdings). Ethan Hawke and Wes Anderson are among the luminaries attending. • 4/25 at 9 P.M. New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. (212-930-0730); $150 in advance, $200 at the door.

Elevator Repair Service Tenth Anniversary
One of the city's most prominent experimental-theater troupes celebrates a milestone with hors d'oeuvre, dancing, a preview of new work, and lots of Tanqueray cocktails. • 4/28 at 7 P.M. Eugene, 27 W. 24th St. (www.elevator.org); $40, $45 at the door.

Actors' Fund of America Gala
A tribute dinner and performance chaired by Michael Eisner celebrates the 80th birthday of *Über*-producer James M. Nederlander, with proceeds going to the fund for performers in need. • 4/29 at 6:30 P.M. The Sheraton New York, 811 Seventh Ave., at 52nd St. (212-245-6570); $750 and up.

Pax Benefit Gala & Awards
The nation's largest organization dedicated to ending gun violence honors Senator Jon Corzine, Dominick Dunne, and Russell Simmons for their work toward that end. • 4/29 at 6:30 P.M. Cipriani Ballroom, 110 E. 42nd St. (866-SPEAK-UP); $300 to $750.

"My Favorite Things"
Signings by Norman Mailer and Kim Cattrall, tastings from Aureole and Tribeca Grill, and an auction of autographed Muhammad Ali boxing gloves and lunch with celebrities are but a few highlights of a cocktail gala benefiting Lighthouse International's music school for the blind. • 4/30 at 5:30 P.M. Lighthouse International, 111 E. 59th St. (212-821-9442); $50, $50 raffle books.

Exhibits

"Building on the Flatiron"
See "Art: Museums," page 86. • 4/23 through 9/1. The New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St. (212-873-3400); free with $5 admission.

MOMA Sculpture at the Botanical Garden
The museum's move to the outer boroughs involves the temporary display of pieces from its famed sculpture garden amid the lush and blooming Bronx landscape. • 4/26 through 8/31. Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, New York Botanical Garden, Bronx River Pkwy. at Fordham Rd., Bronx (718-817-8700); free with $3 admission.

Event

Cherry Blossom Festival
Sakura Matsuri, the traditional festival now in its twenty-first year, has something Japanese for everyone—demonstrations of bonsai, ikebana, origami, and calligraphy; performances, lectures, and a children's parade. • 4/27 and 4/28, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave. (718-623-7241); free with $3 admission.

Sports

USA Weightlifting Championships
This veritable freak show of strongmen (and -women and teenagers) makes a triumphant return to New York for the first time since 1952. Among the 48-kilogrammers, watch 15-year-old Heather Snethen and Olympic gold medalist Tara Nott attempt to break American records and our resistance to the metric system. • 4/26 to 4/28, 10 A.M. to 7 P.M. The Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. (212-691-2200); $10 per day, $25 full pass.

Riverside Ride
Bikers and skaters converge to support the hope that some day, before the polar ice caps melt and flood our streets with ocean bile and unrecycled Coke cans, Manhattan will finally get complete waterfront greenways for non-polluting transportation. Organized by *Time Out*. • 4/27 at 10 P.M. Columbus Circle, Broadway and 59th St. (212-802-8222); free.

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Solutions to last week's puzzles

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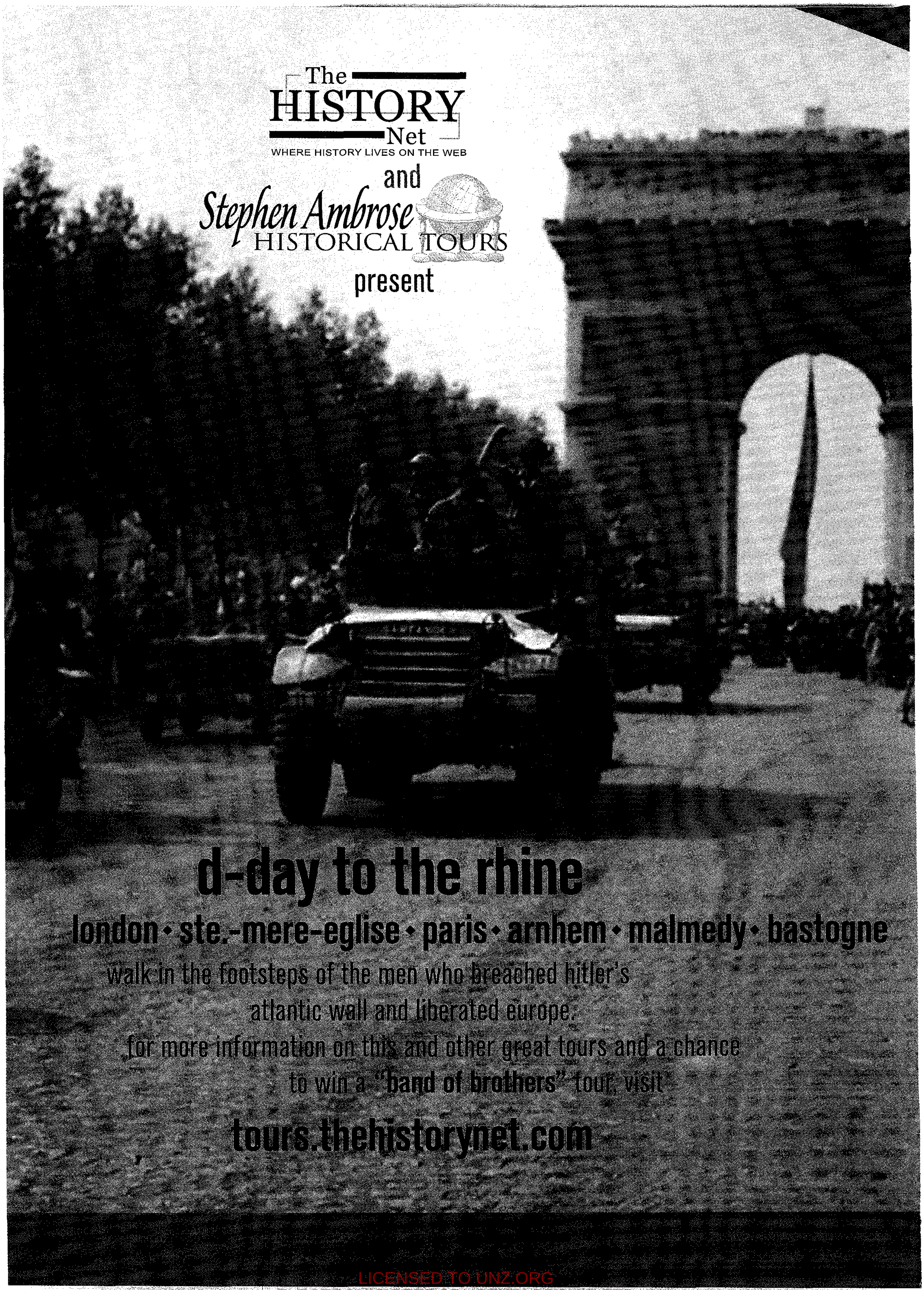

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Kids

Edited by Susan Avery

Children's Events

A Colonial Rewind

Visit the History Channel's Time Machine. (See box.) • 4/26 from 9 A.M. to 8 P.M. at the South Street Seaport; 4/27 from 8 A.M. to 9:30 A.M. at Commerce Bank, 2521 Broadway, near 94th St.; 4/28 from 10 A.M. to 6 P.M. at the Third Avenue Merchant's Spring Expo, bet. 23rd and 34th Sts.; 4/29 from 5 P.M. to 8 P.M. at Commerce Bank, 2521 Broadway, near 94th St.; and 4/30 from 5 P.M. to 8 P.M. at Commerce Bank, Third Ave. and 64th St. (973-744-0707); free.

Because You're Really Smart

TV's most colorful dog is bringing her birthday party to Radio City. *Blue's Clues Live* includes Tickety Tock, Slippery Soap, Mr. Salt and Mrs. Pepper, and, of course, the ever-green-shirted Steve on a search for clues to Blue's birthday present. • 4/26–5/5; Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. and 50th St. (212-307-7171 or www.radiocity.com); $27.50–$47.

Mira, Opera

La Plenopera del Empache is a comedic opera about a gluttonous boy who eats way too much until the town notices and decides to do something about it, much to the chagrin of his mother. From the Society for Educational Arts. Sung in Spanish with projected English subtitles. • Saturdays through 5/4 at 3 P.M.; Los Kabayitos Puppet & Children's Theatre, 107 Suffolk St. (212-260-4080, ext. 14); $10.50 for grown-ups, $8.50 for kids.

Teach Me, Amadeus

Celebrating the life and music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the Little Orchestra Society's Happy Concerts for Young People shows how even as a child, the composer was a musical force. "Amazing Amadeus" includes the orchestra, a child actor, three soloists, and two singers doing the Minuet in G, Symphony in A Minor, and Concerto No. 11. • 4/27 at 11 A.M. and 1 P.M.; Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (212-971-9500); $10–$50.

In the Fold

Origami fans say that almost anything can be created from an ordinary sheet of paper and a pair of hands. A children's origami workshop at the American Museum of Natural History provides an introduction to basic folding techniques and the simple picture language that conveys the skill. For kids age 9–10. • 4/28 from 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M.; American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West and 79th St. (212-769-5200); $28.

Celebrate Jerusalem

A handpainted tile is the ideal commemoration for Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day). Kids at the Yeshiva University Museum will choose the type of tile they create using decorative styles from traditional Dutch and Islamic motifs. • 4/28 from 2 to 3 P.M.; Yeshiva University Museum, 15 W. 16th St. (212-294-8330 or www.yu.edu/museum); $9 for grown-ups, $7 for kids and seniors, $3 for kids age 5 and younger.

Read to Me

WLIW Channel 21's popular Reading Fun Days continue. This version of its regular literacy event takes place at the Westchester shopping mall, with special appearances by Clifford the Big Red Dog, Caillou, Rue McClanahan, and the cast of *Dittydoodle Works*. • 4/27 at 11 A.M.; The Westchester, Center Court, White Plains (516-367-2100, ext. 8044, or www.wliw.org/rfd); free. For directions, call 914-683-8600.

Friends Forever

At the bottom of an empty swimming pool, two buddies mix up magical spells, invent mysteries for strangers, and take imaginary trips to Timbuktu. In *Matthew and Stephen*, they discover the true meaning of friendship. An award-winning production from France, now premiering in English. • Through 4/28; New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200 or www.newvictory.org); $10–$30.

Monster Ink

In *The Perfect Monster*, Sybil feels invisible at school and channels her energies into creating monsters in her laboratory. When the ideal monster emerges, the story takes some fun twists and turns. From Tada Youth Theater. • Weekends through 5/5; Tada Theater, 120 W. 28th St. (212-627-1732, ext. 60, or www.tadatheater.com); $15 for grown-ups, $6 for kids 15 and younger.

Happening

Just in Time

The History Channel's **Time Machine**, a 48-foot trailer, is back in town. In its third trip to New York, the museum on wheels is ready for the tough questions from in-your-face city kids. This time around, the "Founding Brothers" exhibit, which looks at the personal lives of the men who conceived the United States, includes reenactors portraying Washington, Adams, and Jefferson, who starred in an earlier visit about their professional lives. "In New York, we had some tough questions from students," says time-machinist Artie Scheff. "They asked Jefferson how he could be opposed to slavery yet still own slaves. We even had questions about Sally Hemings." The actors, he says, are historians themselves and are fully prepared with historically accurate answers. Other exhibits, which have been updated from past visits, include "Modern Marvels," a review of the world's greatest man-made structures; "This Week in History," where kids can look up what happened on their birth date throughout time; "History's Lost & Found," which chronicles the rediscovery of famous artifacts; and "Save Our History," highlighting conservation efforts around the country. All to prove, Scheff says, "we are *not* a World War II channel." (See "Children's Events.") S.A.

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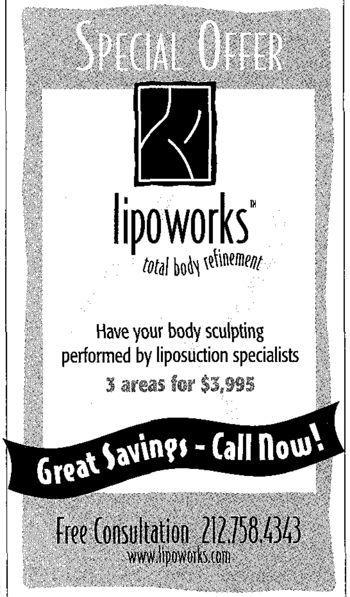

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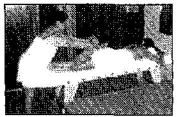

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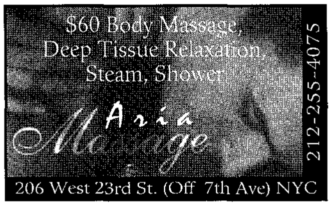

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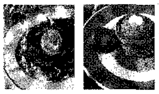

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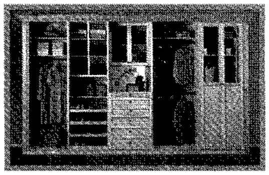

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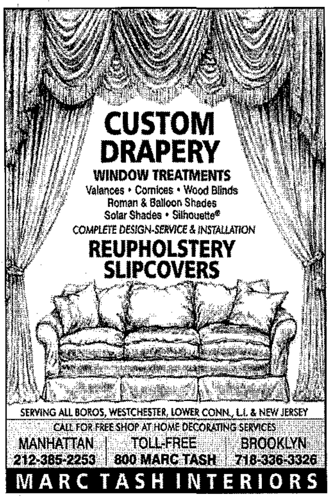

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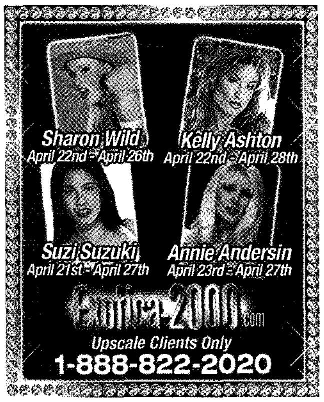
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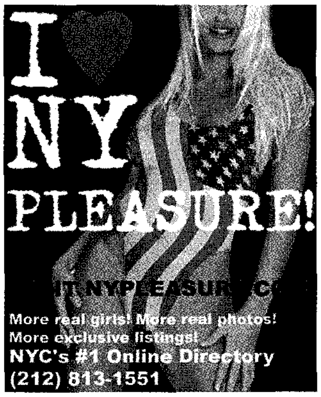
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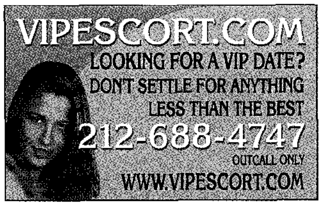
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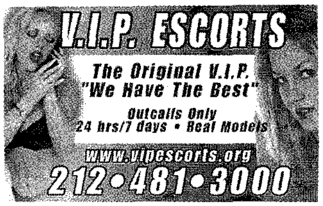
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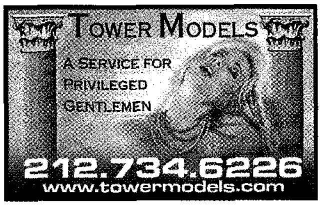
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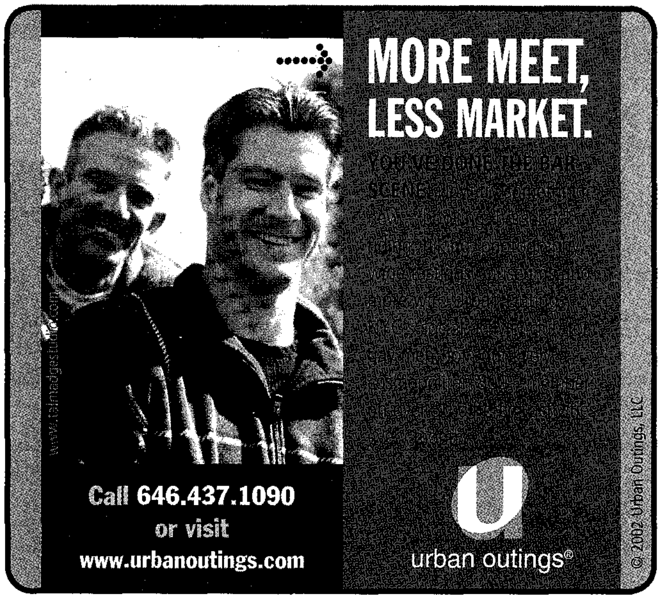

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Lawyer, Widowed, Interesting—Interested? 2266 ✉

Quick Wit And Repartee—Greatly appreciated by this lively, fit, 5'7", blue-eyed, auburn-haired lady, 38, seeking a successful, kind and creative, 35-45 man, who's sharp, spunky and sincere. Photo/note. 2284 ✉

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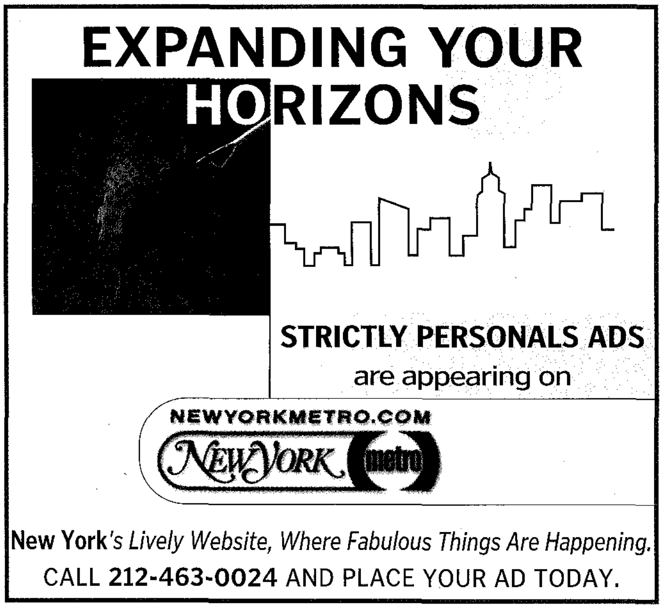
Gay Male—Young 50, 6'0", masculine, trim, "bear-type" successful, creative, fun, affectionate and stylish, enjoy travel, city culture, good friends, LI weekends and staying in shape. Would like to meet similar, late 30s-50. Photo/note. 2296 ✉

Central NJ—Pretty girl looking for outgoing man who will make me laugh - and it won't hurt if he's tall, dark and handsome, 40-55, nonsmoker. Photo. 2256✉☎

Seeking Perfection?—I'm not perfect but I'm pretty damn good. Attractive, smart, sexy, witty, Jewish, 50s female with a zest, seeking male who wants to explore imperfections. Photo/note. 2269 ✉☎

Sophisticated, World-Traveled—Jamaican woman seeks a tall, successful man, 55-65, for all the right reasons. E-mail: nerbax@hotmail.com 2240✉☎



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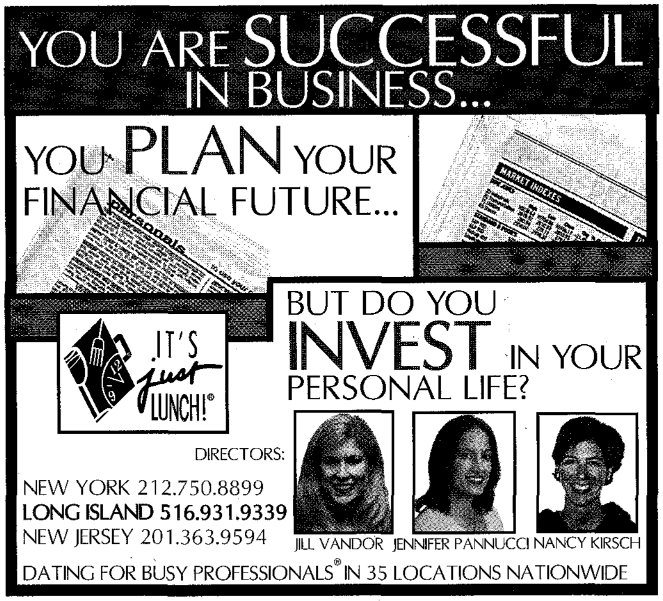
Brooklyn Girl—29, Jewish, cute. You: nice Jewish boy, 29-35, teddy bear. 2280✉

Christian Widower—59, handsome, 5'10", 170 lbs, brown/brown, LI business owner - likes adventure, great art. Seeks very attractive, slim, sexy, cerebral lady who likes to travel. Will exchange photo. 2286 ✉

Christian Russian Lady—Seeks honest man, 55-65, for serious relationship. Write Murray Hill, POB 340, NY, NY 10156

Exquisite, Exotic, Spanish-Swiss—Female, CSW, 38, very attractive, fit, passionate - seeks healthy, fit, professional, charismatic, handsome male, 38-54. Photo/note, please. 2289 ✉☎

Spirited NYC Brunette—Pretty, feminine, romantic, caring, divorced, late 50s, 5'5", multifaceted and musical, seeks accomplished male ready for the love of his life. 2283 ✉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Passionately Alive—Pretty professional, LI, has it all, seeks to share with successful, stylish, loving Jewish man, 57 plus. cuzi35@aol.com 2263 ✉

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Attractive, Curvaceous—European, nice smile, 5'4", 130 lbs, various cultural interests/outdoor activities, available for *enriching moments with accomplished,* attractive, in-shape, 50-60, nonsmoking man. Photo, please. 2287 ✉☎

Pretty PhD—Kind, cultured, fun, seeks fit male - refined, tall, dark, handsome MD/CEO, 38-45. Note/photo. kmsn11@aol.com 2248 ✉☎

Westchester Widow—Elegant, feminine Ivy graduate. Interests include classical music, opera, Europe, home cooking, gardening, art, antiques, family, friends and the sea. Seeking a self-sufficient, educated, cultured, honest gentleman for sharing and caring, age 55-62. 2293 ✉

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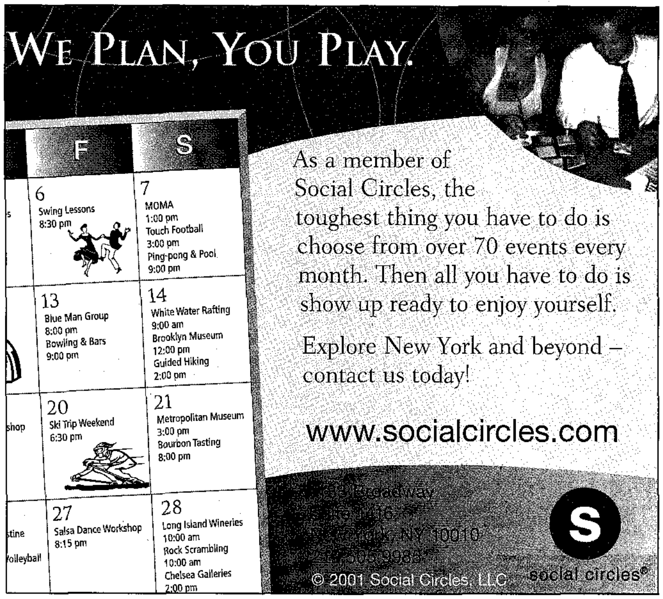

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A Handsome, Fun Guy—39, 5'11", brown hair, blue eyes, successful, with class, who loves romance, hugs and kisses, seeks a slim, attractive, sexy female, 20-40, for a casual, sensual relationship. Staten Island preferred. Phone/photo a must for reply. 2290 ✉

Vibrant, Attractive Professional—Woman, 53, bright, affectionate, petite, Italian-American, emotionally and financially secure. Seeking business or professional man with similar qualities. 2267 ✉☎

Handsome, Very Successful—Entrepreneur - communicative, humorous, athletic, nice guy. Seeking smart, fit, upbeat, pretty woman, about 35-50, up to 5'6", for fun, adventure, romance, to be best friend/lover. Note/recent photo/phone. grouprx18@aol.com 2281 ✉☎

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Attractive Catholic Lady—Financially secure, seeks cultured gentleman, fit, trim, nonsmoker, 5'8"-5'11", clean-shaven, who loves laughter, romance, the arts. Baseball a plus. 65-75. Photo. 2244 ✉☎

European International Businessman—Living in NY and Europe, seeking a very good-looking, sophisticated, well-educated lady, 20-28, who likes world traveling, for a serious relationship only. 2277✉

Tango, Waltz, Rhumba—Partner sought by single white male, 39, 5'6", 168 lbs, success-driven, of European descent. Lessons available. Reply with photo. 2268✉

A Beautiful Brunette—Elegant yet down-to-earth, city/country type, humor and creativity, spice with passion. Seeks sweet, smart guy, 35-50, for long-term relationship. 2282 ✉☎

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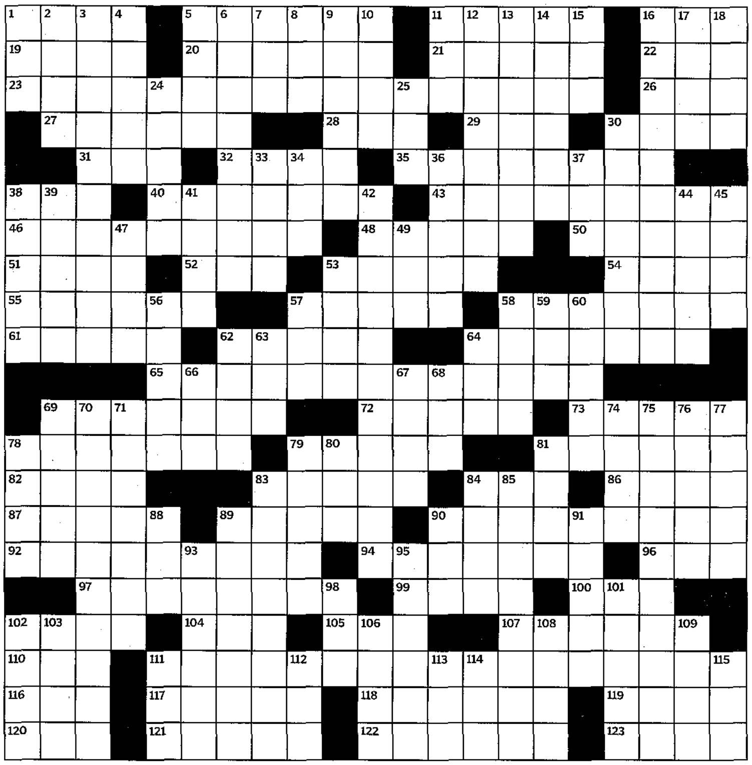

ACROSS

1 Guinea pig's kin
5 Ghoulish TV family
11 Screened again
16 —— who?
19 British preppies' school
20 Moocher of song
21 No friend
22 Losing line at 23-Across
23 TIC-TAC-TOE
26 M-G-M's lion
27 Ordained one
28 Hide the gray
29 Norse goddess of the underworld
30 Light fog
31 Make a little —— long way
32 Landlocked Russian sea
35 Fabulous!
38 Norma of a Sally Field film
40 Went back on a commitment
43 DETOUR
46 STATION WAGON
48 Attend an alumni get-together
50 Bizarre
51 Aleutian outpost
52 Was the front-runner
53 Step to the music
54 Fly high
55 Beliefs
57 Use a divining rod
58 Cite
61 Fire-truck cargo
62 Famed Barcelona architect
64 Delicate handling
65 HARDWARE STORES
69 —— a beet
72 Red-carpet affairs
73 Madrid snacks
78 Arboreal rodent
79 Lukewarm
81 In an inclined position
82 Affectations
83 Powell or Firth
84 Rattlesnake's relative
86 Nicole's "Moulin Rouge" co-star
87 River landing
89 Mental defective
90 CAR MUFFLERS
92 SARAN WRAP
94 Oklahomans
96 Numbered rd.
97 "Spoon River Anthology" poet Masters
99 Troubadour's instrument
100 Cowpoke's assent
102 "West Side Story" gang
104 With "tai," a rum drink
105 "—— my brother's keeper?"
107 Certain ponies
110 Picnic pest
111 GRAHAM CRACKERS
116 Compete
117 January, in Jalisco
118 Catlike
119 —— the kill
120 Classifieds
121 At sixes and sevens
122 Icebox's replacement, familiarly
123 Eyelid ailment

DOWN

1 Ballpoint, e.g.
2 Lying over
3 ZUCCHINIS
4 Prefix for gram or plasty
5 Quantities: abbr.
6 Space from here to there
7 Form of evidence, these days
8 Gloucester's Cape
9 Kind of class or age
10 Exec's asst.
11 Model T contemporary
12 Preserve as something sacred
13 Book a table
14 Highest-grossing French film in the U.S.
15 Abbr. in Albany
16 LAWYERS
17 Former spouses
18 '40s suit with a "reet pleat"
24 Love, on bumper stickers
25 Pensioned off: abbr.
30 Utilizes wrongly
33 Scan the print
34 Cabinet Dept.
36 Draw out
37 To's go-with
38 Arrive at
39 Houston baseballer
41 Smorgasbord dish
42 THUMBTACKS
44 Wax eloquent
45 Claudius's successor
47 Carcassonne's river
49 U.S.N. rank
53 "Dumb" old bird
56 Twig used in basketry
57 One of the Tweedles
58 Journalist-reformer Jacob
59 Direction abbr.
60 Celebratory occasions
62 Capricorn
63 Reply to a ques.
64 Monk's title
66 Vitamin-bottle letters
67 Put on weight
68 Yore, to Poe
69 Disney's little mermaid
70 TABLE NAPKINS
71 Faxes again
74 Billy Baldwin's brother
75 ELECTRICAL OUTLET
76 Not together
77 Start of an Austen title
78 After-bath sprinkle
79 Velvet-voiced Mel
80 "Hold on Tight" rock band
81 Impersonator
83 Coal miners
84 "—— it the truth!"
85 In dreamland
88 Humpty Dumpty, actually
89 Desert illusions
90 French pittance
91 Popular boy band
93 Acute shortage of food
95 Oscar musical, 1968
98 Take in calories
101 Needle cases
102 Coffee, slangily
103 Camelot lady
106 Tick off
108 Peekaboo words
109 Legal delay
111 Rep.'s opponent
112 Sauce for sushi
113 Nickname for Yale
114 Enter the auction
115 Soo abbr.

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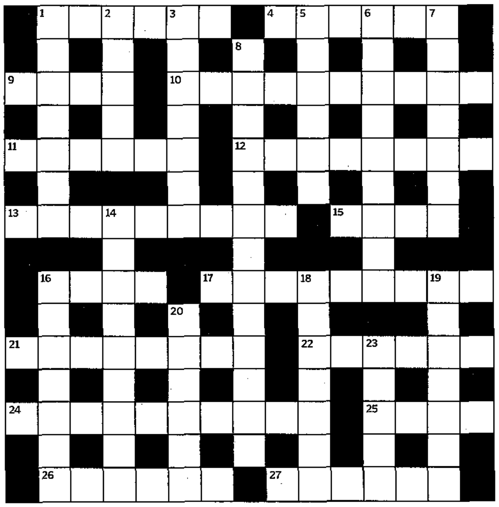

ACROSS

1 Paper contains an unfounded rumour. (6)
4 Titled person on the board. (6)
9 Famous ship built by king in the past. (4)
10 Enthusiasm experienced by a novice poker player? (5,5)
11 Team held by mother to be the tops. (6)
12 His first budget produced happiness, his second misery. (8)
13 It's not easy for him to get off at night. (9)
15 It is thought to be almost perfect. (4)
16 With high explosive around, I would take cover. (4)
17 Not in front of the supporters. (9)
21 Willing to back scholar and provide means. (8)
22 Pompous colonels are old gasbags. (6)
24 Founder possibly rules with the proverbial rod. (10)
25 Intelligence required to get round a delay. (4)
26 More like those blessed with a worldly inheritance? (6)
27 He's involved with any mistreated animals. (6)

DOWN

1 Some for sure. (7)
2 One chap comes up holding a ring for a girl. (5)
3 Stop in a few bars. (7)
5 Announcement given when one is leaving work. (6)
6 Her husband's always playing around, of course. (4,5)
7 Hardy lass has time for a bit of mosaic work. (7)
8 She leads the band with baton. (4,9)
14 As ordered, one goes in the artillery. (9)
16 Some rhymes are so prosaic. (7)
18 Sort of bodice providing freedom. (7)
19 They're rolled in rings. (7)
20 Somewhat flattened, round table needs repair. (6)
23 Article I have written about statesman. (5)

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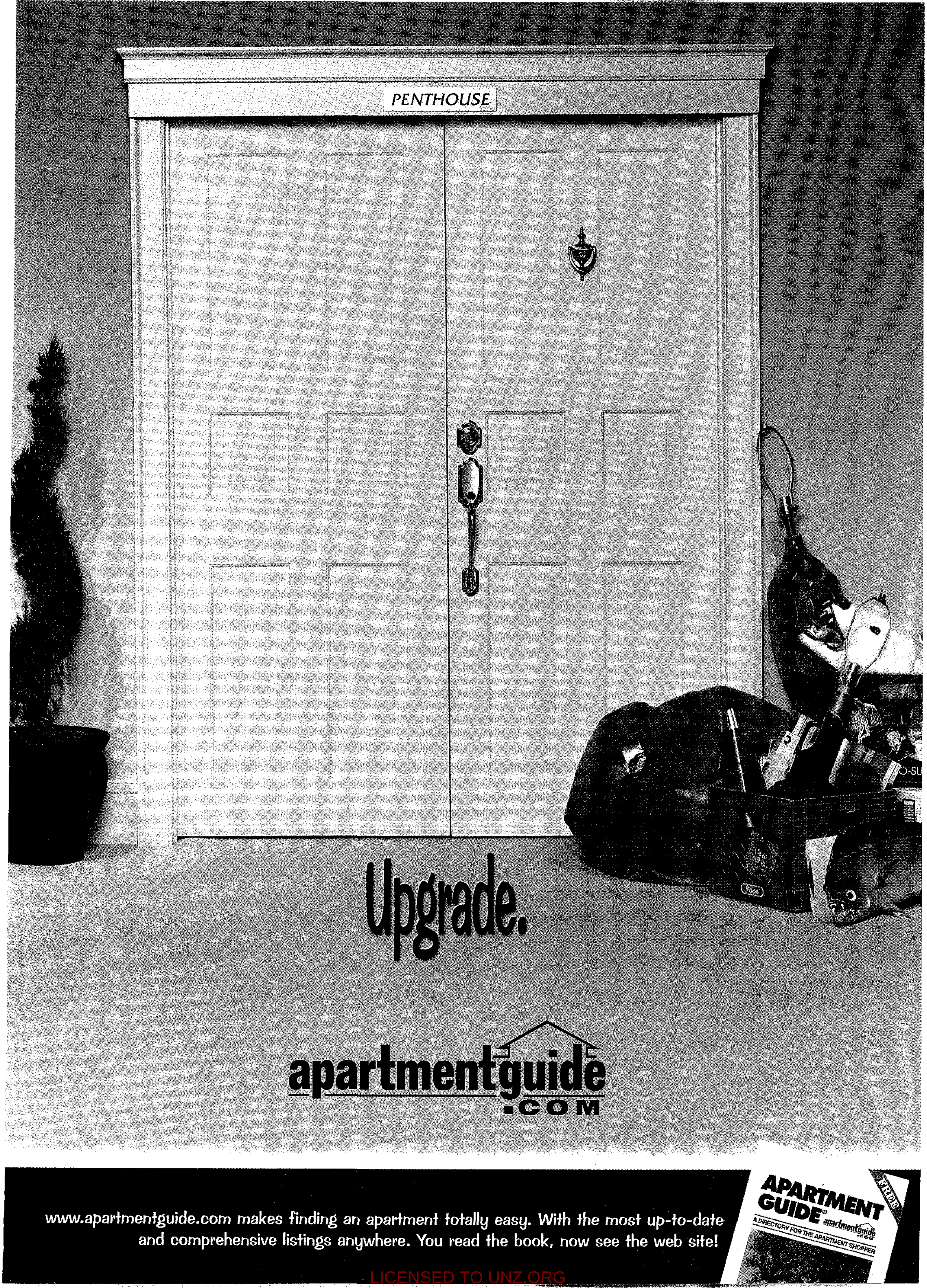
SOLUTIONS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES APPEAR ON PAGE 101; FOR A PEEK AT THIS WEEK'S ANSWERS, VISIT NYMETRO.COM/NYM/PUZZLE.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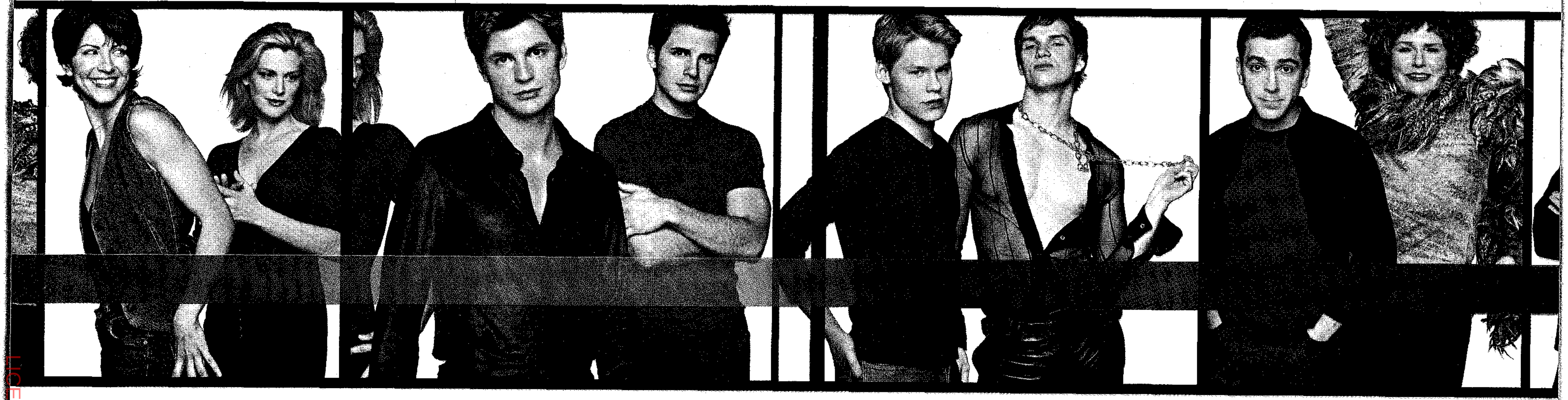

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